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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 2018-19

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** United States Operational Commands: A Proposal for a New Type of Command that Better Synchronizes Military and Interagency Efforts

**Author:** Stuart P Scheller

**Thesis:** Building a new synchronized structure at the operational level of foreign policy is the single most influential thing the United States can do to maintain its advantage in the global arena.

**Discussion:** United States' foreign policy effectiveness will increase with regional interagency operational models. This proposal requires four mutually supporting initiatives. First, pass legislation that creates a new organization at the operational level of foreign policy. The new organization will include all sources of national power represented by the different government agencies under one regional unity of command. A civilian commander who is presidentially appointed will lead each regional organization. This commander will better synchronize regional strategy and increase effectiveness by better allocating resources. The current directors/commanders of the different government agencies will shift from an operational focus to a provider focus. Second, all functional commands currently nested in each government agency should become standalone government agencies that also provide for the new proposed model or they should cease to exist. Third, after legislation creates the new organization, establish a new process of strategy and doctrine to better synchronize efforts. Fourth, as efficiencies or shortfalls are identified within the new model, update legislation, and look for ways to improve the structure.

**Conclusion:** If the United States wants to “create power where there is no power,” as stated in the 2017 *National Security Strategy*, the most effective way to do this is to create a new structure that better integrates all sources of national power into a new interagency operational command.

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## Author's Preface

This paper is my best attempt at conceptualizing the conduct of foreign policy in the most effective way. As a Marine infantry officer, I participated in theater engagement exercises across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific. I fought in both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. I conducted humanitarian operations in a variety of places and a non-combatant embassy evacuation in Lebanon. Witnessing lost opportunities through blood, money, and pain firsthand, I inadvertently became committed to the United States foreign policy process. After much reflection, I decided the biggest breakdown occurs at the operational level of foreign policy. This paper advocates consideration for a model that will make foreign policy more effective.

## THE PROBLEM

*A nation-state with a significant power advantage over all competitors can do without strategy and can perhaps even afford bad strategy. To a certain extent this position describes the United States in the 1990s and early 2000s.*<sup>1</sup> – Jeffrey Meiser in “Are Our Strategic Models Flawed? Ends + Ways + Means = (Bad) Strategy”

Up to this point in history, the United States seems comfortable with multiple government agencies pursuing *foreign policy* (a country’s strategy for dealing with other countries) in redundant and overlapping ways. It is a testament to the natural advantages of the United States that at the *operational level of foreign policy* (occurs when two or more government agencies coordinate below the National Security Council level to achieve strategic objectives) there currently is not even a consistent regional map between various government agencies. This unsynchronized governmental approach not only creates the possibility for wasted resources or counter-productive methods, but it also waters down the United States’ ability to create regional strategy. When multiple countries have varying levels of advantages within sources of national power, the country that reduces inefficiencies across government agencies and synchronizes all sources of power to produce an enhanced effect will have an advantage. Since World War II, the United States has not found the global situation dire enough to seriously contemplate change, but the competitive global situation today demands a reexamination of foreign policy.

The margin of advantage has rapidly shrunk between the United States and competitors such as China and Russia. First, China illustrated the degradation of the United States’ economic advantage when it overtook the United States as the largest economy in terms of purchasing power in 2014.<sup>2</sup> Second, Russia and China are now influencing more nations that have historically aligned with the foreign policy objectives of the United States. Three key examples of this trend are the Philippines, Turkey, and Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> Third, the United States military



advantage, existing since the completion of World War II, is now threatened by conventional state forces from Russia and China. The 2018 United States National Defense Strategy states that the military advantage between the United States and Russia and China is “eroding.”<sup>4</sup> Dr. Christopher D. Yung, a Chinese expert speaking to the Institute of World Politics in June 2018 addressed the erosion of power between the United States and China. According to Dr. Yung, the reversal of this trend will only occur when the United States first addresses the inability of different government agencies to work together in a synchronized manner. He points out that current government agencies work in individual lanes, and from a foreign policy perspective, the United States government “is not equipped” to fuse strategy between the individual lanes.<sup>5</sup>

### **THE VISION**

***While harmonization of the interagency efforts is a goal, it can never be more than partially successful. If this were not so, it would not be necessary to have distinct agencies with differentiated goals and objectives, it would not be necessary to coordinate.***<sup>6</sup>

– William Olson in *Interagency Coordination: The Normal Accident or the Essence of Indecision*

United States’ foreign policy effectiveness will increase with regional interagency operational models. This proposal requires four mutually supporting initiatives. First, pass legislation that creates a new organization at the operational level of foreign policy. The new organization will include all sources of national power under one regional unity of command. A civilian commander who is presidentially appointed will lead each regional organization. This commander will better synchronize regional strategy and increase effectiveness by better allocating resources. The current directors/commanders of the different government agencies will shift from an operational focus to a provider focus. Second, all functional commands currently nested in each government agency should become standalone government agencies that also provide for the new proposed model or they should cease to exist. Third, after legislation creates the new organization, establish a new process of strategy and doctrine to better

synchronize efforts. This process should also standardize across the entire government how resources are allocated to the operational command. Fourth, as efficiencies or shortfalls are identified within the new model, update legislation, and look for ways to improve the structure.

Now more than ever the United States cannot afford to squander potential opportunities and must be efficient with its ability to produce power. The security of the United States and the current international system hinges upon United States' advantages. Protecting this advantage is the most critical task in the face of the current American generation. This paper will provide the history and context for how United States foreign policy arrived to the current structure and the problems with this current structure. It will then demonstrate the need for a decisive authority at the operational level. A forward deployed regional decisive authority controlling all government functions will better enhance power and will be the single most influential thing the United States can do to maintain power advantage in the global arena.

#### **RECENT EXAMPLES OF FLAWED U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

*And in nearly every operation from Somalia to Iraq, a lack of rapidly deployable civilian capabilities has left military forces performing tasks for which they do not have a comparative advantage and has extended the duration of their deployments. The failure to integrate strategy and develop needed capabilities for these operations has been one shared, to a greater or lesser degree, by every administration in recent memory.* - Beyond Goldwater-Nichols, a report in Center for Strategic and International Studies<sup>7</sup>

The current method for conducting foreign policy is failing. The problem exists with the obligations the United States has as a global leader. *As the global leader, the United States feels obligated to ensure a functioning government exists following military operations in an occupied country. This unspoken obligation also extends to protecting civilian populations from violent authoritarians and assistance following humanitarian relief. All three of these situations involve a massive whole of government approach in foreign policy that is currently not executed effectively.* During the counter-arguments section of the paper it will address how some foreign

policy failures are the direct result of poor strategic decisions, and less from a lack of synchronization, but this fact doesn't negate the need for more harmony at the operational level. If the United States wants to remain the global leader, it must protect its resources, synchronize its strategy, and build a model that has a better chance of success.

Since the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986, United States history is filled with examples of national power squandered through an unsynchronized foreign policy. The largest examples of these failures occur during military operations where the largest amount of money and resources are spent. While critics may also argue that some of the major recent foreign policy operations were partially successful, the common thread in all the examples is that they were inefficient. It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail all the historical examples that validate the utility of the proposals in the paper; however, it is relevant to hit wave-top examples to drive home the point. From 1986 to the year 2000, military-diplomatic operations in Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo all illustrate a failure of integration to accomplish all the goals set forth by the President of the United States in the most efficient manner possible. In Panama in 1989, the United States was able to remove dictator Manuel Noriega (Operation Just Cause) but was not as effective when it came to implementing democracy (Operation Promote Liberty). A report on Operation Just Cause published by the director of International Security Studies at the Fletcher School of Law points out that interagency planning and coordination did not exist after the military operations in Panama for two reasons. First, the Department of Defense planned within its own operational model and did not properly integrate civilian agencies. Second, according to the report, "Once involved, the civilian agencies revealed that they were neither conceptually nor organizationally prepared for the kind of situation that followed Just Cause."<sup>8</sup>

The Defense Department estimates that the costs of Operation Just Cause were around 163.3 million dollars.<sup>9</sup>

United States military participation in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia in 1993 produced the same costly lessons. In one year in Somalia the United States incurred over 200 casualties and had spent 1.3 billion dollars.<sup>10</sup> Despite the costs, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office, “the effort in Somalia succeeded as a short-term humanitarian mission but then failed as an attempt at nation-building and as an international venture in peace enforcement.”<sup>11</sup> Finally, during operations in Kosovo in 1999 a *Washington Post* article points out that the operations in Kosovo were “a failure—strategic, diplomatic, and military—that should have been predicted and avoided.”<sup>12</sup> During Kosovo military operations seemed to make worse the chaos and instability they were originally designed to prevent. Furthermore, exacerbating the issue were skyrocketing costs of the mismanaged military-diplomatic operations. The cost of military operations in Kosovo from 1999 to 2001 was around 15 billion dollars.<sup>13</sup> Based on the varying levels of failures of the aforementioned campaigns, President Clinton built Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56. The purpose of PDD 56 was to create better interagency coordination, but PDD 56, as illustrated by the next examples, still fell short.

More recently in the past eighteen years, the failure of the United States to accomplish its security objectives in Iraq and Libya further illustrates the United States’ continuing inability to implement all sources of national power into an efficient, synchronized plan prior to or following military operations. During Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya, the United States goal was to assist the international community in restoring peace. In pursuit of that goal, the United States effectively killed thousands, but in the aftermath local militias created more instability than ever before existed.<sup>14</sup> As Seumas Milne writes for *The Guardian*, “If the Libyan war was about

saving lives, it was a catastrophic failure.”<sup>15</sup> The money spent on Libya was over 1.1 billion dollars.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately the United States and the international partners participating in the campaign were not effective at synchronizing military and diplomatic missions. The parallels of Libya, Somalia, and Kosovo are striking. *Military action without proper integration from diplomatic and other government functions seems to only perpetuate instability. And ironically the instability is often the justification for military engagement in the first place.*

The United States failure of interagency synchronization is painfully clear when examining Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003 to 2009. After toppling the Ba’ath regime, it seemed the combined joint task force was unprepared and unequipped to deal with President Bush’s strategic goal of “securing democracy in Iraq.”<sup>17</sup> Said succinctly by an article in *Policy Review*, U.S forces “simply were not prepared for the core task that the United States needed to perform when it destroyed Iraq’s existing government – to provide security.”<sup>18</sup> The cost of Iraqi Freedom during that time period was estimated at more than two trillion dollars.<sup>19</sup> A large part of the failure in Iraqi Freedom stems from the initial stovepipe foreign policy planning that moved from President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to General Franks the Central Command Combatant Commander.<sup>20</sup> Pushing the strategic goals of President and the National Security Council (remove the Ba’ath Party and to secure democracy in Iraq) from the strategic level to an integrated (not military-centric) model at the operational level will achieve greater success. What is interesting to note is that during the Iraq War, President Bush realized the breakdown at the operational level and issued National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44.<sup>21</sup> NSPD 44 improved upon President Clinton’s PDD56. The new directive ultimately acknowledged the continued failure of interagency coordination at the operational level and put the Department of State overall in charge of rebuilding efforts in Iraq. The intent of NSPD 44

was to outline a model for interagency coordination at the operational level for the specific problem of Iraq.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, and predictably, this ad hoc solution mid operation was too little too late.

### **TERMS**

***Don't trust words. Trust actions.*** -Unknown

A common understanding of the levels of foreign policy and the different terms associated with these concepts needs to be established before proposing solutions. There are multiple articles and books defining the foreign policy process and strategy differently. For this discussion, foreign policy is a country's strategy for dealing with other countries. Influence, which is key in foreign policy, will be defined as the ability to shape the decisions and actions of others. According to the United States Constitution, the executive branch and Congress have responsibilities for foreign policy.<sup>23</sup> Congress' biggest contribution to foreign policy is controlling resources through the budget process. Resources are critical to generate power. The President of the United States drives foreign policy by establishing policy objectives. The United States National Security Strategy (NSS) articulates the President's policy objectives. Thus, many people impact foreign policy, but to break it down to the simplest form: Congress generates power through resources, and the President sets the course through policy and strategy to use that power in an effective way to gain an advantage.

The strategic level is where leaders of the various government agencies conceptualize, articulate, and budget<sup>24</sup> the policy objectives outlined in the NSS in the most effective way possible. This level in the United States is the National Security Council and all the associated subcommittees. This is where strategy is formed. Strategy, different from the strategic level, can be defined from joint publication 3-0, "A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater,

national, and/or multinational objectives.”<sup>25</sup> Said another way, strategy describes the methods for employing power to gain advantages within the foreign policy process.

From the strategic level, the process moves to the operational level where the implementation of policy happens. Here strategic plans couple with the resources to accomplish the plan in a regional area. The operational level currently for the Department of Defense is the combatant command model and for the Department of State it is the bureau for international affairs model. The operational level for foreign policy occurs below the National Security Council level when a government agency applies resources in a regional area with international partners to achieve strategic objectives. The breakdown at the operational level will be the focus of this paper. Not only should synchronization occur in the United States’ two major international operational agencies, but other sources of national power should also be integrated into one coherent operational level model. Then finally from the operational level the process moves to the tactical level where execution occurs. While this very linear mental model can be helpful, it should be noted that in the complex real world often these levels overlap. It should also be noted that there are many advocates who suggest the operational level does not even exist. Regardless, a person or organization can be operating in all levels at the same time or possibly skip levels depending on the tasks.

Strategy hinges upon the term “security”, which is misleading and must be defined. Most people on the surface believe security to be a type of defensive posture to protect against threats. However, the 2017 National Security Strategy defines it as “preserving our way of life, promoting our prosperity, preserving peace through strength and advancing American influence in the world.”<sup>26</sup> This interpretation of security is much broader and all encompassing. Said another way, the National Security Strategy is the map for the United States foreign policy. If

the United States leaders were using clearer language, the senior strategy document would be titled something like the National Opportunity Strategy to highlight the President's goal of gaining opportunity from his coordinated plan. If the term opportunity seems too opportunistic then call the senior strategy document simply the National Foreign Policy Strategy. The term National Security Strategy deceives many people as to its true purpose. Furthermore, there is a requirement for delineating the terms national security and foreign policy. National security is a subcomponent of foreign policy, but the current model has them so intertwined that one cannot be discussed without the other. This paper is attempting to make foreign policy more effective, which as will be argued, inherently increases national security. Some could argue that the proposal will increase effectiveness of foreign policy while weakening national security. That concern will be addressed and proven false later in the paper.

When describing sources of national power, it is important to first clarify what they are. Over the years many academics have discussed the delineations between sources of national power. The most commonly used acronym is DIME: diplomatic, information, military, and economic. Multiple variations of this original model have evolved. One of the longer acronyms is MIDFIELD: military, information, diplomatic, financial, intelligence, economic, law enforcement, and development. There are shorter variations of this acronym such as DIMEFIL or MIDLIFE. And all of these longer acronyms fail to encompass things like culture, history, or language that many experts argue should also be incorporated into the model. This paper will primarily focus on diplomatic, military, economic, law enforcement, development, and intelligence. If it needs to be made an acronym it can be called DEDLIM. The justifications for focusing only on DEDLIM are based on pre-existing structures already present in the government, which through an effective plan can be combined at the foreign policy operational



level. There is utility in strategic thinkers pointing out the benefits of other sources of national power within the synchronized tool at the operational level, but they will not be addressed in this research. The purpose is to clearly articulate the problem and to provide a common-sense answer that can quickly be built in Congress with pre-existing structures. Subject matter experts will need to provide further expertise for each source of national power if the model is to be expanded.

The difference between joint and interagency also needs clarification. The term ‘joint’ only refers to inter-military service coordination. The term defined by Joint Publication 1 is, “activities, operations, organizations, etc, in which elements of two or more [American] Military Departments participate.”<sup>27</sup> For this paper interagency will refer to the coordination of two or more United States government agencies. For example, an effort coordinated by the Department of Defense, Department of State, and Department of Treasury is interagency. It should be noted that joint publication 5-0 defines interagency as interorganizational.

There is also a need to differentiate between operational effectiveness and strategy. According to Michael Porter in his article “What is Strategy,” operational effectiveness is “performing similar activities better than rivals perform them. Operational effectiveness includes but is not limited to efficiency.”<sup>28</sup> It is the art and science of how each government agency employs its power within the overall strategy. Strategy, on the other hand, is the utilization of all agencies by a country to perform different activities from a rival that might gain it an advantage. Strategy also includes ensuring consistency between agencies, ensuring activities of the different agencies are reinforcing, and optimizing those efforts.<sup>29</sup> It is important to clarify the distinction because the process of writing strategy in an attempt to gain an advantage through creative employment of power is a topic for someone else. The process of using strategy to combine

agency efforts at the operational level so that better operational effectiveness can be achieved, despite how that power is used, is the focus of this paper.

### **FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS IS PREDICTABLE**

*All operations have political consequences. They can increase or diminish a nation's ability to achieve its goals; they can commit it unwisely to new and unforeseen objectives; they can, by failure of calculation or execution, discourage its allies or bring new support to the side of the enemy.*<sup>30</sup> – Gordon Craig in “The Political Leader as Strategist”

Effective engagement with the world increases sources of national power. To illustrate this fact a very simple model is offered:

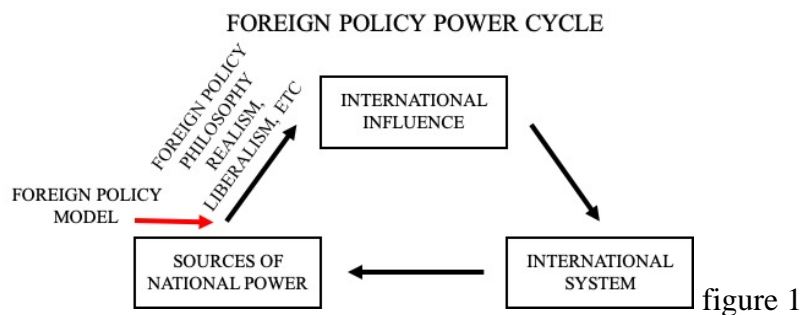


Figure 1 is simplistic but important in establishing the goal in foreign policy. The country with superior sources of national power will produce the most influence, which can be used to influence the international system. Influencing (even portions of) the international system allows a country to gain advantages, prevent attacks, and build upon its sources of national power. The cycle gets stronger and larger the more a country has influence. The cycle gets weaker and smaller when a country's international influence diminishes. In this simple circular model, *foreign policy is both the product and pursuit of national power*. An approach built on another assumption will literally produce a negative sum gain for United States foreign policy. While it can be argued that withdrawing from the global arena protects resources lost in foreign policy, this isolationist approach fails to capitalize on increasing sources of power through the global arena. An inefficient foreign policy model may still provide better results

than no foreign policy. To develop a better understanding on key aspects of foreign policy, a more complicated model is offered:

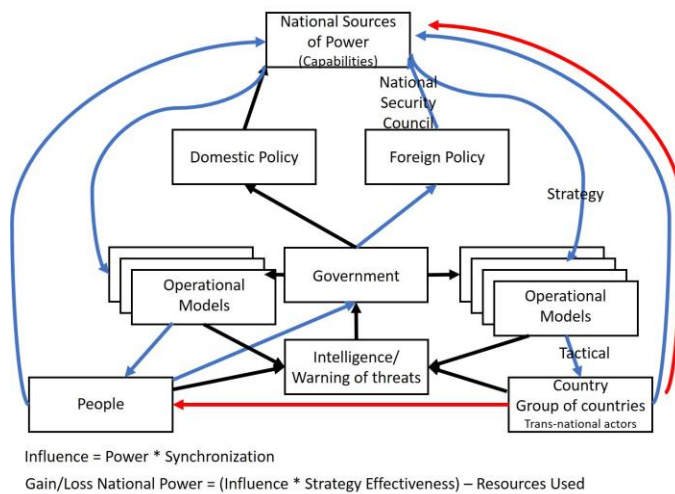


figure 2

Figure 2 draws out five observations for discussion. First, it must be noted that national sources of power still drive the cycle. All foreign policy over a long enough timeline must be considering how to increase capabilities. Second, the threat that often drives foreign policy is important to understand. The red line on the bottom of the diagram best epitomizes the attack on Pearl Harbor and the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. A direct red line from a foreign entity on the people is an alarm bell that the national security process is failing, and thus drives change. However, attacks of this magnitude are rare. Current foreign policy focus typically addresses the “indirect” threat to the American people, which comes from the second red line attacking the United States sources of power. Reading the National Security Strategy is evidence that most United States foreign actions are designed to prevent competitors from reducing or mitigating United States capabilities. Third, it is important to understand the connections between the people, the government, sources of national power, policy, operational models, and the foreign entity the United States seeks to influence. The United States wants to protect and strengthen the blue cycle while mitigating effects from the red, all in an effort to increase capabilities. Fourth,

the operational models on the diagram illustrate the connection from strategy to tactical execution. If strategy is refracted off too many competing models at the operational level, it is easy to observe how this degrades synchronization, which minimizes influence. Fifth, the model drives home the difference between synchronization and strategy. National Security professionals cannot predict the next President's policy. They can predict that the President will employ an international relations theory in an effort to increase capabilities, but the means in which he or she goes about this will vary. *As such, despite the policy approach, national security professionals should focus on synchronizing the operational models and protecting the effectiveness of the process (blue loop).*

### **HISTORY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

***All institutions of government learn, adapt, and make appropriate changes. This is even more imperative for the national security agencies and personnel, where the stakes are high. The distempers in the interagency process evidenced since 2001 created new opportunities for learning and for adaption. Fortunately, in time American democracy will make those adaptations. The question will be at what price and how quickly.***<sup>31</sup>

– Gabriel Marcella in “Understanding the Interagency Process: The Challenge of Adaptation”

The current national security model is a product of World War II. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Franklin Roosevelt and the United States began building the national security model the United States currently uses. The United States at that time realized it was unequipped to deal with foreign policy in the manner the global system required. The Founding Fathers built the United States democracy by intentionally breaking apart power to weaken the government and prevent tyranny. By weakening the country's ability to project power domestically, they also crippled the country's ability to project power internationally. As World War II began, the United States responded to the issues of the time by centralizing power in the national security establishment. The results of these efforts materialized under President Harry Truman's watch with the passing of the National Security Act of 1947. Harry Truman's

successor, Dwight Eisenhower, was also instrumental in the refinements to the new national security model during the 1950s. President Eisenhower's National Security policy in 1955 titled the New Look has striking resemblances to the themes of this paper.

The 'New Look' sought to integrate political, psychological, economic, and military components in a coherent but frugal way. Continuity was the byword. The New Look was imbued with themes, ideas, features and characteristics developed when Eisenhower dealt exclusively with military strategy, but attempted to translate these into the more complex arena of grand strategy.<sup>32</sup>

President Eisenhower's New Look foreign policy model improved upon the World War II foreign policy model and acknowledged the need to shift focus from a military-centric foreign policy model to a model that better synchronized all sources of national power. This shift is even more noteworthy because a former military general ushered it in. Perhaps because the Commander-in-Chief had military experience to the extent of Eisenhower's, it provided him the rare ability to see the truth: *the military aspect of foreign policy is actually made stronger by better synchronizing sources of power even if that means shrinking the military arm to do so.*

It is important to also note one of the failures of Eisenhower's restructuring of the National Security Council. President Eisenhower immediately identified the need for interagency coordination and developed the Operations and Coordinating Board (OCB) to ensure the strategy developed by the NSC materialized into action. The board comprised multiple deputies and assistants and resembles the large deputy meetings of modern day. The OCB by the end of Eisenhower's Presidency had ballooned in manpower and soon consisted of some forty interagency working groups.<sup>33</sup> As a result, in 1961 the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery criticized the process for being inefficient, overstaffed, and unable to respond to emergencies.<sup>34</sup> Ultimately President Kennedy agreed and dismantled the OCB construct. The lesson learned early in the national security process seems to be relearned by every generation.

*More is not always better, and placing the right people in the room is better than placing all the people in the room.* Even though Eisenhower sought efficiency, the excessive interagency coordination cells constructed at the strategic level created the very inefficiencies he was seeking to prevent. New proposed efficiency models will need to learn from the mistakes of the past.

**THE UNITED STATES' CURRENT INTERAGENCY SYNCHRONIZATION TOOLS**  
*Competitive advantage grows out of the entire system of activities... The competitive value of individual activities - or the associates skills, competencies, or resources - cannot be decoupled from the system or the strategy.*<sup>35</sup> – Michael Porter in “What is Strategy?”

The National Security Council and the Principal Coordination Committee is a logical starting point to examine modern interagency coordination. As stated earlier, the National Security Council exists on the strategic level. It is where leaders of the various government agencies conceptualize, articulate, and budget the policy objectives outlined in the National Security Strategy in the most effective way possible. According to President Trump's National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM)-4, the purpose of the National Security Council is to consider and plan for “policy issues that affect the national security interests of the United States.”<sup>36</sup> At the National Security Council level, when the details of a specific policy or group of policies affecting a regional area need to get coordinated across multiple agencies the process is titled Principal Coordination Committee (PCC). A host of players with vested interest staff the PCCs. According to President Trump's NSPD-4, the purpose of the PCC is the “management... of national security policies by multiple executive departments and agencies.”<sup>37</sup> PCCs are the United States' current best strategic level tool for interagency synchronization. There is plenty of academic literature focused on the strategic level and how interagency impacts the National Security Council. The purpose of this paper is not to pull out those lessons. Understanding the existence of the National Security Council and PCC process is enough of a framework to shift focus to the operational level.

President Obama came into office and acknowledged how interagency failures were negatively impacting foreign policy. His administration in 2009 stated, “We recognize the need to ensure an appropriate balance between civilian and military efforts... [We understand] current military programs might be better executed by other Departments and Agencies.”<sup>38</sup> Different than the Bush administration, President Obama did not focus interagency reform on the PCC process (under Obama it was titled Interagency Policy Committees); the Obama administration focused interagency coordination at the operational level. The administration coined terms such as “operational level interagency coordination”<sup>39</sup> and “strategic communication.” The administration did not actually create new agencies or coordination cells; it focused on empowering and improving the key coordination cells already in existence. The key coordination cells at the operational level of foreign policy, the Foreign Policy Advisor Program (POLAD) within the Department of State and the Joint Inter-Agency Coordination Groups (JIACG) within the Department of Defense, became a focus point for the Obama administration.

The Department of Defense and the Department of State have both built similar coordination structures within their operational models. Today the Department of State has placed over ninety POLADs within combatant commands, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other sources of national power to “advise commanders facing a myriad of decisions with foreign policy implications... The POLADS also communicate with Department regional bureaus, fostering a greater awareness of DoD activities conducted around the world.”<sup>40</sup> The Department of State also created the office of Security Assistance, which is responsible for the coordination of Department of Defense capabilities that overlap with the Department of State.<sup>41</sup> Simultaneously, the Department of Defense strengthened the Joint Inter-Agency Coordination Groups (JIACG). The 2018 version of Joint Publication 3-33 states the JIACG cell

is part of the combatant commander's staff and provides the expertise for the "departments and agencies that represent the US diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power."<sup>42</sup> The Departments of Defense and State are not the only agencies with coordination cells. Unfortunately, coordination cells exist in almost every agency because each agency feels the need to maintain an interagency cell that reports directly back to its respective agency. When President Obama realized there was a breakdown of coordination at the operational level, rather than overhaul the system, he decided to focus on strategic communication within the coordination cells. *While coordination cells mitigate the loss of power at the operational level, they are not the most efficient model.* Current United States leaders cannot reasonably think more coordination cells or more focus on communication within the coordination cells will solve the problem. Soon agencies will not be able to conduct their core functions because of the massive amount of power it will take to coordinate with competing models rather than executing core tasks.

### **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOREIGN POLICY MODEL – DEDLIM**

*Genius consist in a harmonious combination of elements, in which one or the other ability may predominate, but none may be in conflict with the rest.*<sup>43</sup>

– Carl Von Clausewitz on describing *military genius*

While the combatant command is a military-centric model originally designed for foreign conflicts and war, it is arguably the most important foreign policy model to understand before a new organization can be proposed. First the term 'combatant command' must be clarified. Contrary to logic, the combatant command is not primarily focused on combat. Currently when major combat occurs, a joint task force deals with the threat. For example, recent operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria all turned into joint task forces stood up underneath the combatant command structure.<sup>44</sup> Combatant commands push control of combat operations over



to a staff that can focus on the specific combat problem. The combatant command only provides forces and expertise in a combat theater until a subordinate joint-task force assumes responsibility. When planning combat operations over a long timeline, the combatant command creates sub-unified commands. For example, underneath Indo-Pacific Command a sub-unified command named Korea exists<sup>45</sup>. In other words, in both examples it is not the combatant commander invested into the combat but commanders at lower levels. Combat is not the combatant commander's priority. Security in the designated regional area is the combatant commander's priority. And with the United States' broad definition of security, *the new purpose of the combatant command has evolved into setting conditions within the combatant command to accomplish United States foreign policy goals.*

The National Security Act of 1947 created the combatant command structure. Within title 10 code 161 the term unified combatant command was for the first time defined as “a military command which has broad continuing missions and which is composed of forces from two or more military departments.”<sup>46</sup> In current practice a unified combatant command is subdivided into two different structures: functional and geographic.<sup>47</sup> A functional combatant command is a joint force that is organized to focus on a specific function. It is not tied to a geographic location. The United States currently has four functional combatant commands: Cyber Command, Special Operations Command, Strategic Command, and Transportation Command. A geographic combatant command is a joint force that is organized to focus on a specific part of the globe. Currently the United States has six geographic combatant commands illustrated on the map below: Africa Command, Central Command, European Command, Northern Command, Indo-Pacific Command, and Southern Command.



<sup>48</sup> figure 3

***Picture of the DOD global foreign policy model known as combatant commands. Picture from United States Department of Defense.***

The purpose of the combatant command has evolved since its inception. The military created the first two geographic combatant commands following World War II: Indo-Pacific Command in 1947<sup>49</sup> and European Command in 1952<sup>50</sup>. The combatant command concept originally addressed how to better integrate and command a joint force in the face of a military threat. Following World War II, Indo-Pacific Command and European Command allowed the United States to forward deploy and integrate a military force to focus on military threats from the Soviet Union, Japan, and Germany. However, over seventy years, the original concept for utilization has changed. As recently as 2007 the Department of Defense established Africa Command, and it was not in response to a direct military threat similar to what the United States faced following World War II. Many analysts agree Africa Command was created to compete with foreign investments, most specifically relating to oil and China, that were occurring on the African Continent<sup>51</sup>. Furthermore, it should be noted that with the creation of Africa Command, and Northern Command in 2002<sup>52</sup>, the United States has now divided up the entire globe into separate joint military commands. The question needs to be asked, “*Does the Executive*

*Branch's increasing reliance on the Department of Defense justify the creation of military commands across the globe despite the absence of omnipresent threats, and if so, is there a more efficient model?"*

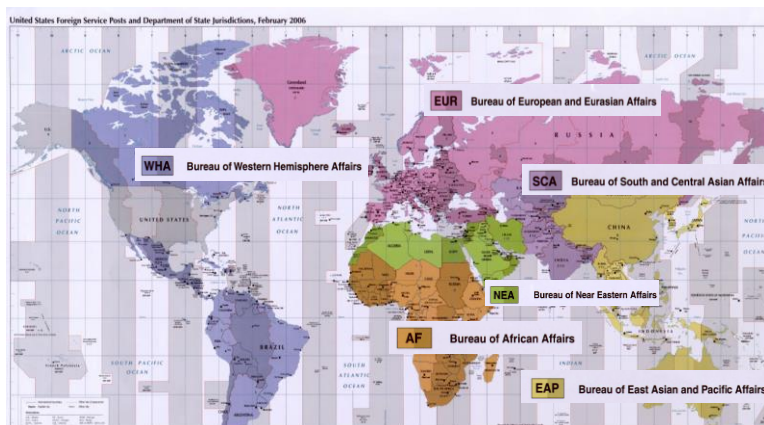
The combatant command model is the best resourced model currently utilized to accomplish foreign policy objectives, but the model has limitations. An obvious first problem with the combatant commands is how the boundaries differ from Department of State and other government agency boundaries, which will be illustrated in the next section. The second problem is how the terms security and combat have evolved. If the purpose of the combatant command is military centric, then a significant dismantling or reshuffling of structure needs to occur. If the purpose of the combatant command is to "advance American influence" as the National Security Strategy identifies as a security goal, then an entirely new structure that better integrates diplomatic, economic, intelligence, and law enforcement tools should be created.

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOREIGN POLICY MODEL – DEDLIM**  
***If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.*<sup>53</sup>**  
-Secretary of Defense James Mattis

The Department of State is historically, and arguably still, the best tool for advancing American influence throughout the globe to accomplish American goals. However, just like the attack on Pearl Harbor forever changed the national security establishment, the role of the Department of State changed forever after this event as well. As Nicholas Burns points out, "After the shock of Pearl Harbor, [the Department of] State lost its advantageous position as the lead agency in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy."<sup>54</sup> Since that time, the Department of State has outsourced diplomatic requirements to the Department of Defense. The creation of the combatant commands was the driving factor in this shift. The disparity in resources, which has grown over time, has widened the gap between the agencies. Currently, in fiscal year 2019 the

Department of Defense received a budget of 717 billion<sup>55</sup> while the State Department only received a budget of 38 billion<sup>56</sup>. The State Department is only receiving 5% of the Department of Defense's budget. Often strategy is conceived based on what is thought to be attainable, and based on the disparity between resources the default reliance is on the military combatant command. Unfortunately, the current structure forces the President to use the Department of Defense to solve diplomatic missions, and based on the wide divide, no single President can completely shift this over reliance on the DoD. It will take decades of responsible budget re-balancing to reverse the wide divide. *Rather than rebalancing the budget over a twenty-year period, a more immediate effect of power enhancement would occur if at the operational level the different agencies were synchronized so individual agency budgets were all supporting the same objectives.*

Below is a map of how the Department of State divides the international system.



<sup>57</sup> figure 4

***Picture of the DOS global foreign policy model known as Bureau of International Affairs.***

***Picture from United States Department of State.***

A major and obvious problem with the operational level is the different boundaries individual agencies use to divide up the globe. The differences in the combatant command global map and the international bureau map can be observed by comparing the two. There are

many papers and articles demanding for at least unified boundaries across the various agencies. Unified boundaries are a step in the right direction, and will be addressed later in the paper, but it is not enough. An entirely new model should be built at the operational level.

The Department of State as the second largest foreign policy model has assumed the role of implementing other sources of national power within its model. However, the extra responsibilities take away from the core capabilities of the Department, and frequently all of these extra responsibilities overlap with those of the Department of Defense. One example is the implementation of the development source of national power through the diplomacy agency. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) falls under the Department of State and is the best United States tool for development of infrastructure in a foreign country. According to USAID's website, "in support of America's foreign policy, the U.S. Agency for International Development leads the U.S. Government's international development and disaster assistance through partnerships and investments."<sup>58</sup> In FY 2017 the agency was involved in 142 countries worldwide and spent over 19 billion dollars.<sup>59</sup>

The Department of State also provides the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) branch as a major contributor of America's export of law enforcement power. According to its website, "INL works to keep American safe at home by countering international crime, illegal drugs, and instability abroad. INL helps countries deliver justice and fairness by strengthening their police, courts, and corrections systems."<sup>60</sup> Federal agencies such as the FBI, ICE, US Coast Guard, and US Marshall services all have some type of international law enforcement presence, but they often conduct their foreign missions through INL. For example, the FBI legal attaché offices, commonly known as legats, operate through INL out of the American embassies and offer law enforcement services to the host nations.

According to the FBI website, there are currently sixty-three legats, and many smaller sub-offices, “providing coverage for more than 180 countries, territories, and islands.”<sup>61</sup> In total, the amount spent on the DOS’s implementation of INL activities, not accounting for the overlap in other law enforcement agency budgets, in 2017 was over 1.2 billion dollars.<sup>62</sup>

### **ECONOMIC SOURCE OF POWER – DEDLIM**

*Strategic economics encompasses all those elements of foreign economic policy that contribute to international influence. This includes both familiar techniques of overt economic warfare and the more subtle methods of employing economic assets to enhance power. The integration of these and other measures into a coherent geopolitical strategy would provide crucial support for overall U.S. diplomatic and strategic objectives.*<sup>63</sup>

– James O’Leary in “Economic Warfare and Strategic Economics”

The United States currently lacks an agency that directly advocates for all aspects of economic power. Currently a host of agencies share the burden of applying economic power. However, this paper advocates for breaking this source of power out as a separate entity because economics influences the international system more so than any other source of power. When all government agencies apply economic concerns in an uncoordinated manner it can contradict efforts and waste money. When talking about breaking economic out as a separate entity in foreign policy from individual agency budgets, it is important to identify what are, and what are not, the critical components of economics in foreign policy. From a domestic perspective how to generate revenue, tax, maintain value of the dollar, and protect global currency are critical. And all impact foreign policy, but should not be the focus of the foreign policy economic department. For foreign policy, someone needs to be forward deployed at the operational level, tied into the regional strategy, advising on how to do the following: 1) Use tools to manipulate a trade balance either directly focused on a competitor or through an indirect way. 2) Use regulations to control access to the private banking system. 3) Determine cost effective analysis for the interagency strategy against competing nations.

The Council of Economic Advisors and the Department of Commerce are the government agencies best equipped to provide forward deployed economic experts along the criteria mentioned. The Department of the Treasury is the government agency best equipped at addressing domestic concerns (even though it has international branches). Currently the Department of State is often the agency communicating most economic issues with the host nation. It could also be noted that private American companies, the military, or a host of other actors may impact economic concerns within foreign policy more than anything else. But all other actors also have restrictions on employment. The caveat when discussing the economic source of power is not assuming all choices of a commander are viewed through an economic gain/loss lens. A commander at any level should be using all his sources of power in a synchronized effort to gain the most influence. Following this line of logic, it can be assumed economics may not always provide the most influence for every situation. For example, when discussing military engagement relative advantage may be much more influential than economic power. Furthermore, creating a separate economic deputy does not absolve the other agencies from managing their own independent budgets. Each agency will still need money to conduct their core functions. However, an economic expert should exist outside of the individual agencies at the operational level so that his/her perspective remains whole of government to support the strategy of the regional area. Ultimately the economic source of power is critical, and an operational model that incorporates all sources of national power needs a separate deputy to specifically analyze the economic factors outlined above.

#### **INTELLIGENCE FOREIGN POLICY MODELS – DEDLIM**

*The primary role of the intelligence community is to provide information that will help policymakers understand the elements and dynamics of the various situations they are dealing with.*<sup>64</sup> – Article in Affairs of State: The Interagency and National Security

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) provides so many capabilities replicated by the military source of power that another book could be written on this topic. One example is the current creation of cyber command in the Marine Corps and how it directly impacted the shrinking size of the rifle squad. In other words, the Marine Corps is trying to do more with the same resources hoping it enhances its product at the expense of core competencies. The old saying of “do less better” seems forgotten. What if the Marine Corps could keep the size of its rifle squad (arguably the cornerstone of its core capability) by never creating a Marine cyber department because while forward deployed, a seamless integration existed with the intelligence agency that included a robust cyber capability? ODNI is the lead department of the United States intelligence community. It currently divides its functions into a cyber threat intelligence integration center, national counter-proliferation center, national counterintelligence and security center, and national counterterrorism center.<sup>65</sup> All current intelligence agencies feed into the ODNI structure, and as a result, ODNI should be responsible for the “I” representative in a forward deployed synchronized operational model.

### **THE HURDLE**

***The need for interagency or intergovernmental coordination is not new. Awareness of that need and efforts to effect better coordination are not new. The landscape is populated with studies to this effect, with laws and executive orders directing it, a variety of institutional arrangements seeking it, and a growth industry in analyzing it. Failures to achieve it are biblical in their proportions. No one is opposed to interagency coordination – in principal. Everyone wants it – in principal. It’s a fine idea whose time has come – in principal.***<sup>66</sup> – William Olson in “Interagency Coordination: The Normal Accident or the Essence of Indecision”

The biggest hurdle with the vision is the complexity of the problem. Unfortunately, proposed efficiency models for complex systems will not solve all the problems, and thus experts have the luxury of dismissing proposals as incorrect answers without examining their utility. What it is even more alarming is the lack of acknowledgment for the need of such endeavors.



However, there is a need to state up front that any model claiming to solve the problem of foreign policy is a model that will not be taken seriously.

The resistance to creating new models or new programs in government is as solid as the bureaucracy protecting current institutions. Every President since the Goldwater-Nichols legislation of 1986 has in some form acknowledged the same problem, but all of them have been unable, or unwilling, to fix the system. President Trump, picking up where his predecessors continually failed to fix the root cause, issued a memorandum M-17-22 from the executive office of the President. It states:

Despite growing citizen dissatisfaction with the cost and performance of the Federal government, Washington often crafts costly solutions in search of a problem. Too often the focus has been on creating new programs instead of eliminating or reforming programs which are no longer operating effectively. The result has been too many overlapping and outdated programs, rules, and processes, and too many Federal employees stuck in a system that is not working for the American people... President Trump aims to make government lean, accountable, and more efficient.<sup>67</sup>

There are cost savings in making a system more efficient by reducing redundancies across the different agencies. However, the logic fails to maximize potential. Reducing redundancies enhances power by protecting resources. Creating a decisive authority for implementing foreign policy at the operational level also inherently reduce redundancies, but it also re-synchronizes efforts all within the forward deployed context. It ensures the right tools and agencies are applied to the right problem. The forward deployed decisive authority has a better understanding of the regional problems, and thus is better equipped than current staffers on the National Security Council at allocating the correct resources to specific problems. This approach also ensures agencies are not countering each other's efforts while forward deployed.

Improving the multiple government agency approach is not new. Books like *America's National Security Architecture* discuss a "Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency or a whole of

government arrangement that would make it easier for various civilian agencies to gain a seat at the table as circumstances required.”<sup>68</sup> In fact, the concept of interagency or whole of government is so saturated with recommendations it seems people have stopped listening. However, if someone were to spend time reviewing all the documents certain trends would emerge. All people agree there is a breakdown of interagency coordination, but three separate groups of thinking materialize when addressing the interagency problem.

The first group acknowledge the multiple government agency approach is broken, but rather than seek a new system, they advocate for dealing within the current system more effectively. This group makes up the majority of people because it requires the least change. Donald Rumsfeld sums up this sentiment with his comment, “If a problem has no solution, it is not a problem to be solved but a fact to cope with over time.”<sup>69</sup> Clayton Chun and Frank Jones point out in “Learning to Play the Game: The National Security Policymaking Process” that “it is impossible to change the [interagency] process to a degree that will satisfy senior leaders who believe that there is a solution that will guarantee better coordination, information sharing, and policy outputs. We do not argue for structural changes, the most often suggested panacea, but instead suggest that the existence of such as a solution is a chimera.”<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, this group of people seems defeated, and their recommendations of dealing with the problem through better communication falls dramatically short of what national security professionals deserve.

The second group of people advocate for change, but they cannot seem to break focus from the National Security Council itself. An example of this is Stephen Cambone’s book, *A New Structure for National Security Policy Planning*, where Mr. Cambone details a new structure for the Council that involves many things to include eliminating the National Security Advisor<sup>71</sup>. This group is preferred to the first because it is at least attempting to solve the

problem, but the major problem with this short-sighted group is that they fail to correctly diagnose the problem. There may be breakdowns at the strategic level, but the model that will impact interagency coordination the most exists at the operational level.

The third group of people correctly identify the problem, but their recommendations fall short of any detailed solution. An example from this group comes from the “Project on National Security Reform,” which is an analysis on national security reform conducted by leaders from all over America to include Newt Gingrich and Ash Carter. In this study one finding states, “Policy development in Washington is often disconnected from operational considerations overseas and the system is better at formulating policy than implementing it. Therefore, U.S. regional policy implementation tends to be dominated by Department of Defense geographic combatant commands.”<sup>72</sup> While this study and many like it do a good job of identifying the problem, without a detailed plan for reform, the debate inevitably falls back into the first groups way of thinking.

Foreign policy and national security are long overdue for re-examination. Legislation has not significantly updated the current combatant command model since the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Prior to Senator McCain’s death in 2016, there was discussion of a major overhaul to the legislation. The commonly used phrase was Goldwater-Nichols 2.0.<sup>73</sup> The problem during these discussions was the number of different ideas, often in direct conflict, for reform. Goldwater-Nichols happened in 1986 because across national leaders there was consensus of a breakdown in inter-service coordination. While many services at the time adamantly opposed combining the services into a joint force, the end result was in the best interest of United States power enhancement. However, unfortunately no consensus currently exists with national leaders for the problems of interagency failures. The Center for Strategic Studies published a spreadsheet of all

the different national security professionals that testified with competing ideas.<sup>74</sup> It is interesting to note that during the Goldwater-Nichols 2.0 conversations, General James L. Jones, a former Commandant of the Marine Corps, former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, and former National Security Advisor under President Obama, testified before congress about creating interagency regional centers. In 2014 General Jones published “All Elements of National power”<sup>75</sup> for the Atlantic Council which better details his proposals. Since there was no consensus during the Goldwater-Nichols 2.0 discussions, General Jones’ recommendation were one of the many that seem to be forgotten. If the proposals in this paper are to be weighed with any merit, General Jones’ work must also be reviewed to offer another perspective on how to solve the problem. The differences between General Jones’ recommendations and this paper are a matter of details, but both bodies of work see the problem in the same way, and use the concept of building a regional interagency coordination model under a decisive authority to fix the problem of interagency coordination.<sup>76</sup>

**A NEW MODEL – UNITED STATES OPERATIONAL COMMANDS (USOC)**  
*Each civil and military department is structured to pursue its own distinct goals, rather than the optimization of national policy goals across the board. Consciously or not, those who populate the separate departments are likely to resist a concerted scheme whenever it clashes with their particular bureaucracy.*<sup>77</sup> – Edward Luttwak in *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*

The World War II model of national security that drives foreign policy is no longer sufficient. If the United States wants to remain the global leader in the international system, to prevent the foreign policy disasters of the past thirty years, and to remain competitive in the global power struggle, it needs to develop an operational command that encompasses all sources of national power in one synchronized model. A forward deployed regional decisive authority controlling all government functions will synchronize regional strategy, better allocate resources, and ultimately enhance power of United States foreign policy. Creating more coordination cells

or addressing how to share information more effectively are not sufficient solutions. The entire system at the operational level should be replaced. The new structure needs to replace the Department of Defense's combatant command model and the Department of State's international bureau model and incorporate them into one model. The model needs to incorporate other sources of power as well. The model needs to break apart DEDLIM into six deputies under one unified commander. Functional commands that are deemed unique and critical also should be represented as an equal and separate deputy within the command. The structure needs to be regional. The name of this new model can be United States Operational Commands (USOC).

The USOCs should have leadership appointed by the President of the United States. If the President of the United States drives foreign policy, it seems appropriate that he or she should appoint leadership responsible for the forward deployed tool that integrates all sources of national power to accomplish foreign policy goals. Additional resources are not required from Congress. The individual agency budgets will suffice in the beginning, but over time the USOC's coordination will bring back balance to the separate agency budgets that have grown so out of proportion.

The USOC will not create foreign policy that is completely coordinated. All it does is better enhance operational effectiveness at the foreign policy operational level. It should be pointed out that better coordination at the operational level does not correspond to coordination at all other levels of foreign policy. However, a choke point in the operational level does impact all other levels and make them more coordinated. In the current model coordination starts at the top and diffuses in all directions through the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. In the USOC model the strategic level is inherently more coordinated because all agencies are supporting the effort at the choke point of the operational level. Also, the tactical level is more

coordinated because the efforts are coming directly from a coordinated effort. The operational level is the fulcrum of foreign policy. Furthermore, this centralization of efforts at the operational provides context that strategists in Washington do not have. Said succinctly by William Kiehl in his article “Strategic Information and the National Security Process”:

Successful public diplomacy campaigns are rarely ‘invented’ in Washington. Indeed, most of the ‘brilliant’ ideas from inside the Beltway are at best marginally successful in an overseas context. They too often presuppose a cookie cutter approach to the world with a one-size-fits all policy line to which the hapless public diplomats abroad are expected to tow. If there is one concept that seems to elude the political masters of the Washington bureaucracy, it is that in public diplomacy it is all about context.<sup>78</sup>

*The choke point at the operational level not only synchronizes National Security Council strategy in a forward deployed tool, but it also provides a whole of government strategy filter for contextual regional concerns and practical application limitations.*

There may be concerns that the USOC model will marginalize military capabilities, but this should not be the case. Providing better synchronization at the operational level will only enhance the full spectrum of military operations. The biggest concern is placing a civilian in charge of the military at the operational level. However, civilian control of the military already exists through the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense. Adding a third civilian into this chain does not change the current relationship and is not a dramatic divergence from the current employment. The civilian at the operational level is not dealing with tactical military employment. The civilian commander only provides a whole of government regional strategy that the military deputy enhances with military options. This is a divergence from the current practice of a military commander replicating a whole of government approach with only military tools. Furthermore, when combat operations exist within the civilian commander’s regional theater, the military deputy of the USOC will not be the one focused on the combat operations. The military deputy in the USOC will advise the civilian commander so that a

proper whole of government strategy can be built and correct resources utilized. During the combat operations, a joint interagency task force will be stood up underneath the USOC model as is done in current practice. The USOC model will provide the regional interagency coordination at the top of the force that Presidential Directives and coordination cells have failed to achieve. Most notably, the post-conflict response that the over the last thirty years in Panama Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo, Iraq, and Libya that has continually lacked efficiency.

New boundaries should be created for the USOCs. Below is a proposal that makes the most sense in combining the two biggest operational models. However, the actual boundaries are much less important than creation of any type of boundaries seen universally across all governmental agencies.

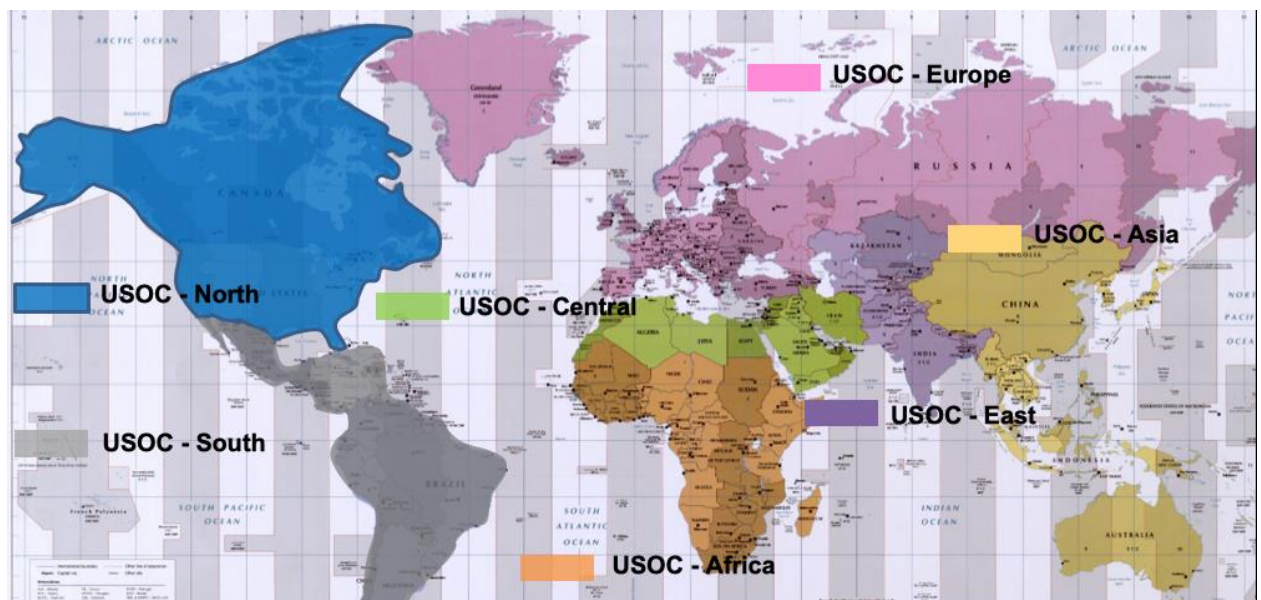


figure 5

The Department of State map should largely be adopted so that the wheel is not re-invented. However, Northern Command and Southern Command need to be adopted from the military structure into the new structure. Southern Command and Northern Command provide different enough challenges that they would be better served by breaking them up for the new proposed

model. The Department of State map was adopted and not the current military structure for a couple of reasons. First, Indo-Pacific Command is way too large of a command. The recent renaming of Indo-Pacific Command (named only Pacific Command up until 2017) illustrates this truth. Leaders realized the second largest democracy in the world was often overlooked when people focused on China. The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs breaks up India and China into separate boundaries. Secondly, the State Department map is preferred because it devotes a bureau almost entirely to the Horn of Africa where most of the troubled hotspots on the African continent occur. Currently African Command devotes a joint-task force to the Horn of Africa, but it would be better suited for the USOCs to break up this boundary.

### **TASK ORGANIZATION OF USOC**

***The challenge of developing or reestablishing a clear strategy is often primarily an organizational one and depends on leadership. With so many forces at work against making choices and tradeoffs in organizations, a clear intellectual framework to guide strategy is a necessary counterweight.***<sup>79</sup> – Michael Porter in “What is Strategy?”

The USOC is the foreign policy operational model that will guide effective implementation of foreign policy strategy. It improves operational effectiveness. A proposal to task organization is below. The fear with creating a diagram is that people will focus on details of the diagram and point all the inefficiencies or road blocks with the proposal. The organization chart is just a tool to help conceptualize the proposed model. It can obviously be altered as long as the concepts are applied. Disclaimers up front, there are a lot of details missing from the diagram. The diagram intentionally does not show key players at all the levels. For example, the Secretary of Energy is not represented on the National Security Council. There are numerous under-secretaries, deputies, and other members not neatly represented on this model. There are



relationships that can not all be represented with lines on the diagram. However, the diagram is a critical first step in conceptualizing the proposed model.

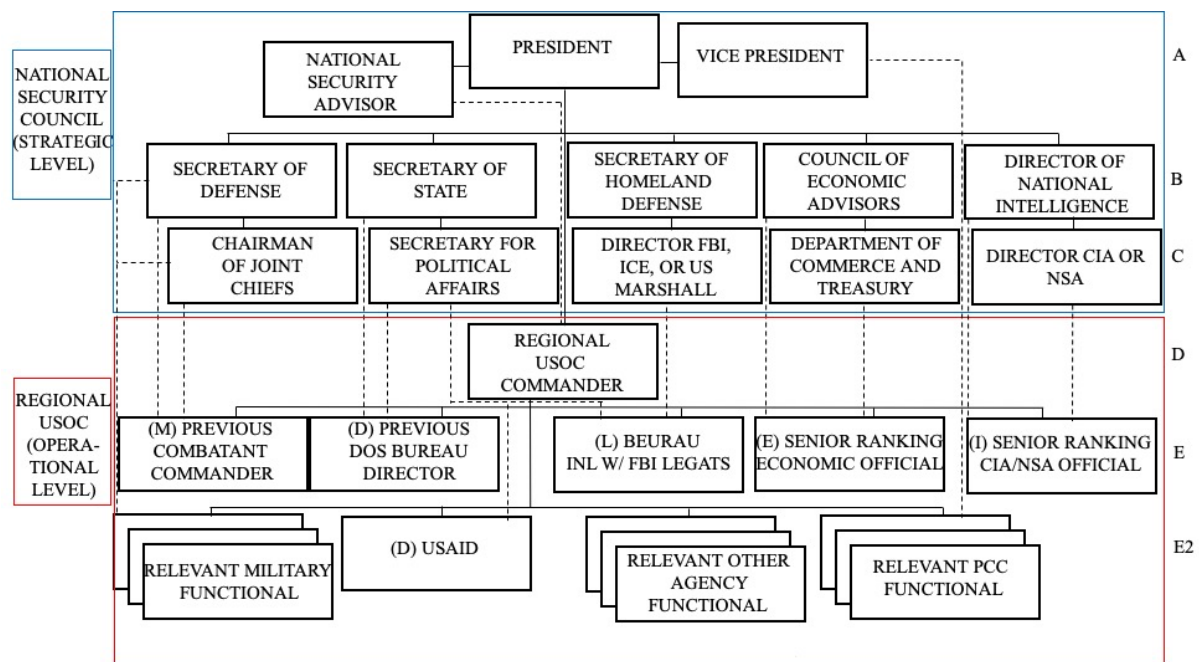


figure 6

*The biggest take away from the model is how at level D all efforts are refocused through the USOC commander.* The USOC commander receives direct tasking from the individuals on level A, but is obviously influenced by players on all levels. The individuals on level B and C still have administrative relationships to the departments on levels E. However, the USOC commander has operational control of these individuals/departments while forward deployed in the regional USOCs. Level D is what United States current models lack. Current models start at Level A, and from there dramatically diverge despite the efforts of coordination cells. The choke point at the operational level inherently reduces redundancies and synchronizes efforts.

The USOC proposal is competing against the current operational national security model, which consists of multiple different agency global maps and approaches held together by coordination cells. Coordination cells attempt to mitigate divergence of agencies in

implementation of strategy through communication. The USOC model attempts to synchronize divergence of agencies' priorities through organization at the operational level. *The critical question when examining utility of the proposal is evaluating if the USOC enhances synchronization and lowers wasted resources more than coordination cells.*

The functional organizations on level E2 are unique and should be integrated into the USOC model. There are currently too many functional organizations in each agency that have overlapping responsibilities and focus. When Congress creates the USOC, one of the hardest tasks will be determining which functional commands to keep, which ones to combine, and which ones to trash. Once there is agreement on what functional organizations should be represented in the USOC, the functional agencies will represent sources of power just like any other long-standing agencies. These functional agencies will still have administrative relationships reaching back to their respective agency homes. But what is unique about these functional sources of national power, at least in current practice, is that they are staffed from the other major agencies within the model. Perhaps if the USOC model identifies functional agencies that are not represented neatly in other agencies, over time these functional agencies could begin to recruit and train their own staff from entry-level positions to senior leaders. Furthermore, not represented on Figure 7 are the functional commanders who still need to exist to provide the training and focus for the capability the function represents. Those commanders will still reside in the United States, but their purpose will shift towards overseeing the training of the people in their function. For example, the State Department's functional bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor would need a commander that resides in Washington D.C., to continue to organize and advocate for that specific source of power. But that commander would need to develop seven deputies that he or she would push to regional USOCs.

Those deputies would be equal in status to the regional bureau State Department representative who represents the State Department's core task of diplomacy.

### **COUNTER-ARGUMENTS TO USOC**

*Successful companies tend to develop a bias for predictability and stability; they work on defending what they have. Change is tempered by the fear that there is much to lose. The organization at all levels filters out information that would suggest new approaches, modifications, or departures from the norm. The internal environment operates like an immune system to isolate or expel 'hostile' individuals who challenge current directions or established thinking. Innovation ceases; the company becomes stagnant; it is only a matter of time before aggressive competitors overtake it.*<sup>80</sup> – Michael Porter in “The Competitive Advantage of Nations”

Five valid counter-arguments can be made against the USOC model. The first counter-argument is that different boundaries and approaches at the operational level provide different perspectives, which get lost under a unified model. However, the current military model provides a great example that drowns out this argument. Following Vietnam, the United States realized that multiple different perspectives (Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Force) did not provide the unity of effort desired to maximize power. Thus, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 provided the update to the combatant command model. During these discussions, there was consideration to combining all the services into one service to maximize unity of effort. However, people realized and acknowledged that combining all the forces would degrade the individual core competencies and cultures that made each service great. As a result, they turned the service chiefs into producers of forces for the combatant commanders. The service chiefs now train, man, and equip their individual forces for employment by the combatant commanders. This concept protects the core competencies of the individual services during training, but also provides unity of effort when these forces are forward deployed. This same logic of employment should apply to every government agency, and if subscribed to, negates the argument that different approaches and boundaries provide a better approach. Individual department heads

should be in charge of training, manning, and equipping their individual forces based on budgets, requirements, and core competencies. But the ultimate goal should be to provide the USOC commander a representative for a source of national power. That expertise when combined with the other sources of national power, wielded as a tool under one unity of effort, is the most effective way of maximizing American power. Everyone agrees coordination across government agencies makes sense. Where people disagree is how to achieve such coordination. *Ironically, anyone who says the USOC model does not make sense is by extension saying the military model does not make sense. If the military model makes sense, why not make it more effective as a whole of government model?*

Functionality of global capabilities that do not fit neatly into USOC boundaries is a second counter-argument to the model. The military has its functional combatant commands. The State Department has its functional commands. Even the National Security Council on the strategic level has its functional PCCs. All of these functional entities exist because they require a specialty skillset or focus that do not fit neatly into current agencies or boundaries. Functional capabilities will not go away. However, the functional entities must shift their purpose, the same as the individual agencies, to become a producer for the regional USOC. If the functional entity is critical enough to stand up as a force separate from the individual services or agencies for the purposes of protecting or focusing on a capability then they should be treated as a separate source of national power. For example, in the USOC model the military special operations functional command will provide a deputy to the USOC, but that deputy will be seen as an equal to the military deputy. This proposal does not prevent functional entities from continuing to execute global operations as illustrated in the next paragraph. However, if functional entities continue to execute outside of the operational models, their objectives will continue to create just

as much divergence in coordination as currently exists. Creating structure for agencies, but not for functional entities, is only solving half the problem.

A third counter-argument to the USOC model is that the nature of today's threat is global. Trans-national crime, non-state actors, and international terrorists operate on a global scale, and by focusing on a small slice of the globe the bigger picture will be missed. However, the USOC model does not prohibit the practices that already exist. For example, the military designates the chairman of the joint chiefs as the global combatant commander. That will not change with the proposal. Each individual agency should have a leader that remains focused on the global perspective. Furthermore, the USOC does not prevent the leaders operating on the strategic level from continuing to execute global operations. The military special operations functional combatant commander will still continue to execute global missions when tasked directly from the President or Secretary of Defense. However, it is only common sense that all effort should be made to push special operations, bi-lateral engagements, drone strikes, or any other tactical operations from the strategic/national level to the operational/USOC level where forward deployed commands will have a better regional context.

A fourth concern with the USOC proposal is the increase in time that comes with an added level of bureaucracy. Valuable time is wasted when information must travel through too many people before action. Goldwater-Nichols 2.0 in Congress recently addressed inefficiencies created by the excessive manpower structures that can attach themselves to these models. While adding a layer is a concern, it could also be argued that unity of effort may save time that is otherwise lost trying to figure out the actions of other agencies. Furthermore, clear intent on how to employ the USOC from the President to the USOC commander, and vesting with this commander the authority to execute (vis-a-via decentralized control) may speed up the process

rather than hinder it. But to address the concern of time, and learning from President Eisenhower's large coordination cells, a stipulation needs to be made about manpower thresholds for each sub-department in the USOC model. Congress should only allow each department to staff the USOC with the absolute minimum number of capable personnel. Refinements can always be made in future legislation similar to what happened after the National Security Act of 1947. Once the USOC staff increases to a size larger than approximately 150 people, the USOC will start producing the very inefficiencies it is designed to prevent. While the proposal recommends multiple different functions and capabilities for the regional USOCs, it is imperative that the structure is restrained to be thin enough that everyone on the staff is communicating with each other.

Finally, critics marginalize the utility of the USOC when they confuse the problem it is trying to solve. They often point out United States foreign policy and military failures of the past fifty years have more to do with leadership misreading the situation and entering engagements with a bad plan. These critics think the problem has less to do with synchronizing efforts. As stated earlier in the paper, the USOC cannot overcome poor strategic level decisions. In a best-case scenario the regional USOC commander, who writes the whole of government strategy for the regional area, advises disconnected Washington planners with deeper regional context and prevents poor strategic decisions. However, history demonstrates that despite all the best advice in the world, poor strategic decisions will still continue to occur. This should not be a deterrent to implementing the USOC model. Even when poor strategic plans are put into place the USOC will at least mitigate the damage. The USOC increases foreign policy effectiveness in a losing effort by eliminating overlapping resources. Additionally, the USOC synchronization proposals do not take all sources of national power and equally apply them to each scenario. This

approach obviously will not always produce the best result. Applying the correct mixture of forces and resources will require critical thought. The USOC model will simply provide a better unity of effort and synchronization so that when innovative solutions are conceived, everyone is working towards the same goal and not against each other. This proposal will not solve all the problems, nor is it the only solution, but it is definitively more effective than current models.

### **LEGISLATION THAT IS REQUIRED**

*We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objective that we've set. We've got to have a civilian national security force that's just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded.*<sup>81</sup> –President Barack Obama

The USOC requires new legislation to turn the concept into a reality. The biggest problem for many to accept in the attainment of the USOC vision is the different title responsibilities that regulate the Department of Defense (title 10/50), the Department of State (title 22), and other federal agencies. These federal laws provide different sources of funding and regulations for the different departments the USOC proposes combining. However, focusing on all these issues detracts from an easy first win. The easiest way to achievement in the USOC vision is to first create the structure. New legislation at first simply needs to create the new USOC map and allow the President to legally appoint a commander that can command and synchronize the different deputies discussed in this paper. As long as the USOC commander can legally give direction to the different deputies, there is not an immediate need to change the laws that regulate each function. There will be challenges to overcome with the different sources of money and legal requirements while different United States agencies work in such an integrated model, but that is what amendments can do in the years following the initial legislation. Legislation that creates the proposed USOC with initial friction points will still produce more effective foreign policy in the global arena than current models that contradict, replicate, and fail to enhance American capability. Furthermore, one of the biggest accomplishments when passing

Goldwater-Nichols was creating a structure that forced military officers to get joint experience for promotion. When passing new legislation, the concept of interagency experience has to be addressed. In the study, Beyond Goldwater-Nichols it compares the military joint construct with other agencies and states:

There is no comparable system of incentives and requirements to encourage interagency rotations among civilian professionals across the national security agencies. Quite the contrary: rotations out of one's home agency are often viewed as the kiss of death for one's upward mobility. In an era in which purely military operations are becoming an endangered species and interagency operations abound, we need to plan the seeds of jointness in the interagency context by creating incentives that reward interagency experience.<sup>82</sup>

New legislation must include a clause that forces different agencies to move across the interagency to gain a larger perspective for promotion purposes.

#### **NEW STRATEGY AND DOCTRINE DOCUMENTS**

*Strategy is a practical business. Scholars who lack experience in government, let alone in war itself, are apt to forget this.*<sup>83</sup> – Colin Gray in “Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture”

The United States strategy writing process has the same flaws as the current foreign policy process: from the President the process diverges so much that there is not a synchronized, coherent approach. Within some agencies there is a lack of strategy, in some too many strategy documents, and with others strategy that either opposes or undermines fellow agencies. The military agency provides a good example to spark discussion for the strategy writing process; when the National Security Strategy is published the Secretary of Defense subsequently publishes a National Defense Strategy. The National Defense Strategy is still on the strategic level. Following the National Defense Strategy two documents are published that are a bridge between the strategic and operational levels: The National Military Strategy and the Joint Strategic Campaign Plan. After these documents are published, the combatant commanders are



expected to write a strategic estimate. They write it by “analyzing and describing the *political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure* factors and trends, and the threats and opportunities that facilitate or hinder achievement of the objectives over the timeframe of the strategy.”<sup>84</sup> In other words, they outline what they want to accomplish by nesting their strategy with the higher strategy documents and with a realistic view of what can be accomplished based on their resources. The Unified Command Plan in the military model is where leaders determine the resources of each combatant command based on the total military budget. The Unified Command Plan establishes missions, responsibilities, assignment of forces, areas of responsibility, and specific responsibilities.<sup>85</sup> It is signed by the President of the United States through recommendations from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense. It is the President’s way of taking the legal framework provided by the Goldwater-Nichols and assigning resources and responsibilities that support his policy objectives at the operational level.

There are two major problems with the strategy continuum highlighted by the military example. First, the military agency should not be writing a strategy that covers all sources of national power at the operational level. This is where inefficiencies grow out of control. The military should be one tool in a synchronized interagency effort at the operational level. Second, there are too many strategy documents in the military continuum between the National Security Strategy and the operational level. A single military strategy should be written by the Secretary of Defense addressing the global employment and priorities of the military source of power. At the operational level the USOC commander should write one strategy document nested primarily with the National Security Strategy taking into account all the considerations of the individual agencies. In the military example, the regional USOC commander builds his regional strategy straight from the National Security Strategy, but takes into account employment considerations

addressed by the Secretary of Defense strategy document. From the regional strategy, each deputy in the USOC can write a separate document outlining how he/she plans to accomplish the USOC commander's vision.

Another major problem with the strategy continuum is the variance in strategy documents from the other agencies. The Department of State's recent publishing of the Joint Strategic Plan for FY2018 – 2022 is an example of another agency strategy that is one level down from the National Security Strategy. It is a great example of a quality strategy document that represents an agency other than the military agency. However, since the publishing of the 2017 National Security Strategy a new National Intelligence Strategy (last published in 2014) has not been published. And there currently is not an economic or foreign law enforcement strategy published similar to the aforementioned. The bottom line is that each source of national power represented on the strategic level at the National Security Council should be required to publish a strategy that is nested with the National Security Strategy in a timely manner. From there, the process should move directly to the operational level.

Furthermore, call it a Unified Command Plan or something else, each agency commander on the National Security Council needs to approach the President at the same time with a document that officially allocates resources to the USOC. For the USOC commander to effectively write strategy at the operational level, he/she needs the ability to anticipate resources. As a result, all agencies need to be mandated to have the Unified Campaign Plan, or similar agency plans, pushed to the President at the same time for approval.

Another deficiency with the United States' current multiple approach foreign policy model is that no doctrine regulates how all sources of national power should work together. The military has joint doctrine that dictates how the military should operate with other governmental

agencies, but other governmental agencies are not bound to this same joint doctrine. Once legislation approves the structure of the USOC, new doctrine should be immediately created that guides how the USOC will function. The National Security Advisor should author the document, and the leader of each function represented in the USOC should sign the document. This document would then help focus the training of each department as the agencies provide forces to the USOC. This new document should be titled Interagency Doctrine.

### **CONTINUE TO REFINE THE PROCESS**

*The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.*<sup>86</sup> - Carl Von Clausewitz in *On War*

As efficiencies or shortfalls are identified with the USOC process, update legislation, and look for ways to improve the structure. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go down all the rabbit holes that exist on this topic. What experience should the USOC commander have and for how long will he or she serve? Does the USOC commander have assistants above the deputies representing sources of power? Does the USOC regional commanders execute the same function as the current strategic secretaries but with more focus on a specific part of the globe? Does the United States still need a Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense in the new model? Could not the chairman of the joint chiefs or a career diplomat provide the global expertise at the National Security Council without a civilian secretary? Are coordination cells still a requirement? It seems obvious that the coordination cells on the operational level should dissolve, but do principal coordination committees on the strategic level still exist? If they do exist, what is their new role? What functional commands are relevant? What are the separate roles of the Department of Commerce and the Council of Economic Advisors? Should the Council of Economic Advisors dissolve or expand? If the economic source of power is represented as a separate entity why is information not represented as a separate source of

power? Should it be? How do individual agencies place importance on interagency experience in the USOC? Should interagency experience be a requirement for promotion in each agency?

The amount of questions that fall out of the proposal are numerous. Leaders who try to find the exact solution to the model before implementation will find themselves talking about the problem as the global system is reshaped. Just as the National Security Act of 1947 did not seek to solve all the problems with the passing of initial legislation, legislation that establishes the USOC should be implemented with full understanding that subsequent legislation will be needed to update the model.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Almost as if according to some natural law, in every century there seems to emerge a country with the power, the will, and the intellectual and moral impetus to shape the entire international system in accordance with its own values.*<sup>87</sup> - Henry Kissinger in Diplomacy

The United States has already identified that one source of national power operating in isolation will not effectively accomplish the goals of United States foreign policy in the complicated operating environment. This applies to war, diplomatic engagement, special operations combat missions, economic sanctions, and others. While currently the National Security Council develops policy and strategy, its top-down disaggregated approach mitigates rather than enhances global power. The goal of a leader in any organization is to create the structure that best facilitates success. The USOC proposal is an organizational change that will more effectively enhance power and reduce redundant resources in United States foreign policy. It protects the core capabilities of all the different departments while synchronizing their efforts. It provides context to strategy under a forward deployed force. All the attributes of the USOC, combined with effective employment of foreign policy, will manifest into greater international influence.

United States' foreign policy effectiveness will increase with regional interagency operational models. This proposal requires four mutually supporting initiatives. First, pass legislation that creates a new organization at the operational level of foreign policy. The new organization will include all sources of national power under one regional unity of command. A civilian commander who is presidentially appointed will lead each regional organization. This commander will better synchronize regional strategy and increase effectiveness by better allocating resources. The current directors/commanders of the different government agencies will shift from an operational focus to a provider focus. Second, all functional commands currently nested in each government agency should become standalone government agencies that also provide for the new proposed model or they should cease to exist. Third, after legislation creates the new organization, establish a new process of strategy and doctrine to better synchronize efforts. Fourth, as efficiencies or shortfalls are identified within the new model, update legislation, and look for ways to improve the structure.

When historians of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century look back on the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they will inevitably tell a story about how the United States chose to project power, how that influenced the international system, and what that meant for world order. As Graham Allison points out in his article "Thucydides Trap" great power competition between the United States and China does not mean the two countries are inevitably headed to war. However, the United States would be naïve to remain complacent. In global competition, the United States will not appreciate advantages across sources of national power like it has taken for granted in the last century. Any belief that war is no longer a threat in the next century is simply ignoring the patterns of the last two centuries. The utility of the USOC is that not only does it enhance power and reduce

redundancies across all government agencies, but more importantly, this enhanced power can be used to 1) prevent war or 2) be more effective at achieving the end state if we end up in war.

The USOC model does not solve all the problems of interagency coordination. The proposal is scary. More will oppose the idea than embrace it. Passing legislation of this significance in Congress that marginalizes historically great organizations will be close to impossible. And even if an initial structure is pushed through Congress, the difficult reshuffling of organizations will probably take a half-century to perfect. To those who ask why the United States would even consider such a proposal, reading the Henry Kissinger quote at the top of the section may remind people of the turning point in our current global system: the country, or group of countries, with the most influence shapes the global system. The United States would be wise to examine how it continues to create, use, and synchronize power in foreign policy

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