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INTERAGENCY REFORM: CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE THROUGH EDUCATION AND ASSIGNMENT

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ABSTRACT

The root issue of interagency woes is the absence of an effective interagency process to drive policy integration and synergy within the departments of the Executive Branch. Contrary to popular belief, organizational restructuring of the National Security Council or departments is not required; the 1947 National Security Act gave the Executive Branch the structural agility to deal with modern security issues. A better and more feasible option is to focus on the people operating inside the interagency community. That takes changing basic organizational culture using an in-stride method that capitalizes on two momentous influencers of organizational culture - education and interagency assignments.

INTERAGENCY REFORM: CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE THROUGH EDUCATION AND ASSIGNMENT

> The founding fathers designed our government to prevent the abuse of power, not necessarily efficient, governance.[1]

—Colonel Gregg E. Gross (2006)

The implications of this opening truism encapsulate the most serious test facing the United States in its quest to advance national interests and values through the 21st century. In the incredibly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment of the modern world, the United States government is ill-suited to plan or execute the massing of national power on a focused solution when confronted with challenges to its global objectives. The root issue is the absence of an effective interagency process to drive policy integration within the departments of the Executive Branch. The result; too often successful outcomes to these challenges become more dependent on personalities and luck than skilled governance. This is a dangerous strategy for a superpower that sees the international community increasingly forming interest blocs to counter its aims.

What is the answer to the dilemma of interagency security coordination? A wide variety of academic and governmental pundits have an equally diverse spectrum of recommendations. These options range from structural changes in the National Security Council (NSC) and Executive Branch, to redistributing departmental roles and responsibilities, to legislating requirements to cooperate better. All of these alternatives have intrinsic merit but in the end remain impractical based on the tremendous time investment required before seeing any fruits of labor. This analysis believes that the VUCA environment confronting the U.S. today dictates the answer must be an in-stride solution. The value of an in-stride solution is that it brings about measurable and continuous improvements in interagency synchronization, but without the risk of paralysis that comes from radical reformation. Institution of formal interagency education and cross-assignment systems offer just that kind of solution.

Is structural reform really such a radical solution to the interagency problem? Supporters of organizational transformation would contend that American history contains precedent that the alternative is feasible without degradation of governance. Their case study would highlight President Truman and Congress' restructuring of the system in 1947 with the passage of the National Security Act (NSA). The Act tackled transformation of the Armed Forces for the new era ahead through transition of the War Department into the Department of Defense and creation of the three branches of military service. The Act also restructured the formulation of

national security policy through its inception of the NSC. Congress envisioned the NSC as the primary foreign policy coordinator for the President and the nexus for interagency cooperation in the complex Cold War world.[2] The legislative branch, however, stopped short of prescribing the exact duties and responsibilities of the NSC. The Act recognized the need for flexibility in policy execution by the president, leaving latitude for him to use the NSC to conduct national security affairs as he saw fit. That latitude included leaving the NSC's authority level as a tasking or coordinating body to the President's preferences.

The structure created by the 1947 Act has served the country for more than sixty years; dealing with a wide range of security issues and arguably significant in America's enduring role as a superpower. Despite the difficulty of the system in massing national elements of power, the design did shape containment of communism in Europe and produced a strategy coherent enough to ultimately end the Cold War. With that context in mind, should the United States invest the immense organizational energy and time required for yet another governmental reorganization?

This analysis would contend the answer is unequivocally no. The federal government does not need the additional bureaucracy or cost (in both time and money) associated with revamping structure. New organizational structures require significant time to build operating processes. The more dramatic the restructuring, the more substantial the time needed by the organization to learn how to function. Risking up to a decade of even greater inadequacy in security policy formulation for the mere potential of long-term value is unacceptable.

The 1947 National Security Act gave the Executive Branch the structural agility to deal with modern security issues. Structural design is not the problem. The NSC and its sub-committees are capable of coordinating and integrating national power to address issues if given the latitude by the President. The primary council body contains the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense, as well as the Director of National Intelligence, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the National Security Advisor (NSA). Below them, interagency Policy Coordination Committees (PCCs) exist along both geographic and functional lines to analyze security issues and develop options to address them. Beyond that, at the discretion of the President or NSA, the remainder of the Executive Branch is subject to call based on requirements.[3] Clearly this forum is able to meld resident expertise. The United States Government (USG) needs to shift from the standard "problem=reorganization" reaction to poor performance and fully empower the existing system.

If an adequate structure exists, should the solution focus then on codifying requirements to integrate and synchronize within the Executive Branch through a second Goldwater-Nichols

Act? A growing element of the national leadership believes this option the most effective solution for permanent change. Among this group of supporters is our senior military integrator, GEN Peter Pace in his role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. His remarks in September 2004 calling for better interagency coordination, coupled with a potential redistribution of departmental roles and authorities, leave little room for mistaking his views.[4]

At first glance the proposal seems to have merit. Recall, however, that the original Act (five years in the making) focused its objectives on integrating capabilities within a single Executive Department (Department of Defense [DOD]),[5] and the military services had the benefit of a 200+ year history of working together (albeit marginally) in the common environment of conflict. Despite that commonality, DOD still took almost ten years to achieve meaningful results.

An iterative version of the Act, "Goldwater-Nichols II", would need to address integration of more than a half dozen departments and agencies with no common operating bond and significantly diverse organizational cultures. Such an attempt to redefine roles will undoubtedly also provoke organizational counterattacks to preserve existing domain, followed by the same critical requirement that comes with reorganization; invaluable time needed to learn new processes. The bottomline, just determining the design and scope of a legislative act that would have any bona fide impact will take years. Worse yet, full implementation into practical application will require substantially longer than what the Department of Defense required. The dangerous, dynamic, and increasingly globalized strategic environment will not give the United States that kind of time.

The most realistic and feasible option remaining is to focus on the people inside the interagency community. "Adaptability to new and changing circumstances rests with the people who constitute the organizations. Individuals breathe life into the bureaucratic process. They may enable workarounds to meet a common goal…or to cope when they conclude that the stakes warrant nonstandard behavior."[6] In other words, concentrate the intellectual energy of the USG on selecting and growing the right people into the right positions for the next critical moment in American history.

Reality is that legislation alone only mandates change to the technical aspects of the interagency coordination process. To effectively use it in strategy and policy formulation also requires a mindset change in the people charged to implement it. Department leaders, senior staff and principle action officers must experience the strength that emanates from synchronized national power before they will embrace and employ it intuitively. That takes changing basic

organizational culture. Fortunately for the United States, to begin to affect cultural change does not require legislation or restructuring as a precursor.

This proposal for in-stride change capitalizes on two momentous influencers of organizational culture that will improve interagency efforts without requirements for immediate changes in funding, law, organizational structure, or national risk. These influencers are education and assignment. Education provides a broad understanding of USG capabilities within the Executive Branch and where those capabilities complement one another, as well as how they shape the elements of national power. Education also reduces turf battles by developing greater understanding among senior department officials of their role in the interagency environment. With a greater understanding of interagency capability comes the beginning of change in those rigid organizational cultures.

Interagency assignments continue the cultural change by bridging from the theoretical considerations raised in the educational programs, to the reality of melding home agency capabilities with other organizations against actual security challenges. More pointedly, USG employees will discover through experiential learning that authentic integration of capability is so powerful that to choose otherwise defies logic and actually increases the difficulty of problem-solving. Once embraced and preferred, education and assignment will drive reform from within, avoiding the protracted battles of resistance that come from externally mandated change.

The Current Security Environment

The world that confronts America as it moves forward into the new millennium bears little resemblance to the security environment that President Truman foresaw. For a President presiding over post-World War II America during the subsequent four decades, the world was more predictable in terms of threats. Communism, personified by the former U.S.S.R., was the adversary that needed constant watching and parrying. The USG required little in the way of innovative massing of national power to meet this consistent threat.

Today's security environment is decidedly different. Gone is the bipolar world of communism versus democracy. Globalization dominates the world stage, a "non-stop aftershock of the current explosion of knowledge. It has unleashed a rapid, ongoing, uneven, and sometimes disruptive process of expansion of cross-border networks and flows not only of goods, services, money and technology, but also of ideas, information, culture, people and power."[7] The international community over the last two decades witnessed dramatic acceleration of positive globalization effects marked by more democratic and educated societies, and greater distribution of wealth. The political reforms in Eastern Europe, end of

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apartheid in South Africa, as well as the rise of China, Brazil, the European Union, and South Korea as major economic powers, are all testaments to the benefits of globalization.

These same rushing forces also brought disturbing tensions generated by increases in transnational terrorism and crime, financial market instability, the spread of infectious diseases, religious extremism, greater ethnic conflict, and severe environmental decay. Al-Qaeda, the financially-triggered collapse of the Suharto government in Indonesia, drug cartels, AIDS, recent genocides, and global warming are representative of the countervailing symbols showcased by globalization critics as the dark side of this revolutionary change.

Whether a proponent or critic of globalization, leaders of modern nation-states find themselves entangled in vast webs of interconnecting economic, security, and environmental problems. No issue has just one factor or actor in play. Leaders must learn to understand the interests of a new gamut of power brokers at the table – international organizations like the World Bank and UN, non-governmental organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and CARE, and even transnational actors such as drug cartels and leaders of major religious groups. All of these newer groups have diverse objectives, but possess a common desire to redistribute the power of nation-states and their leadership. These variables make for complex security problems. Every solution requires skillful crafting and increasingly employs the entire spectrum of national power. No single governmental agency is able to wield such a huge span of power, making integration of interagency capabilities to achieve those desired effects an imperative.

Against this backdrop, Americans within the USG develop security policy to advance and protect our vital interests as outlined in the 2006 National Security Strategy. Among its key objectives are: championing human dignity, strengthening global alliances against terrorism, working with others to diffuse regional conflicts, ending proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), igniting a new era of global economic growth, and managing the opportunities and challenges caused by globalization.[8] Even a cursory analysis of these goals indicates that no single element of national power can bring about their realization.

Specifically in the realm of security, future military operations will require widely diverse skills to include "combat…refugee protection and relocation, police training, law enforcement, antiterrorism, disaster relief, and reconstruction of transportation and communication facilities."[9] The Defense Department alone cannot succeed in that type of venture. The truth is that each objective will take adroit fusion of the United States' broad national powers, concentrated in execution through interagency capabilities. Today's archaic, stovepipe, and static way of doing

business will not produce the desired effects, nor will the current organizational culture that operates it.

The Interagency Culture Revealed

There are approximately a dozen federal departments and agencies that actively participate in the interagency process for shaping security policy. The core organizations of that group were previously identified: National Security Council staff, Departments of State, Defense, and Treasury, the National Director of Intelligence, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is not an exclusive list, and as the complexity of security issues increases so does the additions to the formula for creating policy. Today, we find the Attorney General, the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, the National Economic Advisor, and Departments of Homeland Security, Energy, and Commerce acting as regular contributors to policy development. Each of these institutions has talented people with broad skill sets. If the interagency's structural design is sufficient and the required skills exist in the USG personnel pool, why then is there such a problem with crafting responsive solutions to American challenges abroad?

Organizational culture within the Executive branch derails the outcome. The interagency process is essentially a politically charged one that has both institutional and personal power at stake.[10] Thus, these same executive agencies and departments view themselves more as competitors for political power and the commensurate resources that accompany it. Moreover, in policy formulation the departments consider themselves as absolute equals; focused on different but proportionately important core areas of governance. From their cultural mindset, inherent skilled expertise grants them an exclusivity in their mandated sphere and correspondingly makes their organization singularly best-suited to advocate policy. To allow another department even partial stake or ownership of an issue in their sphere cedes authority and political power. That is an unacceptable cultural display of "altruism at the expense of turf, longevity, or power"[11] and undermines organizational efforts to protect their existence and expand responsibility.

As discussed earlier, in the security arena the challenges are too complex for a single organization's focused skill set. Unfortunately, when actually working together in the aggregate (normally within the NSC's Policy Coordination Committees), the recurring outcome is an absence of legitimacy in decisionmaking.[12] Cultural prejudices within America's political institutions preclude acceptance of informally given jurisdiction over an issue. No executive department concedes to another any directive authority to task for information products,

personnel augmentation, support for contingency planning, or to even simply attend action officer level meetings. As a coordinating body, the NSC format gives the National Security Advisor authority to use only one frustrating option for obtaining true directive authority; going to the President for help when a department fails to meaningfully participate. That alternative is obviously problematic when it entails challenging senior departmental leadership with aggressive, strong personalities and the ear of the President.

Presidential designation of an agency as lead, known as "Lead Federal Agency" or LFA, would seem to possess the power to cut through the interagency bureaucracy, but rarely produces dissimilar outcomes in security issues. Yes, the designation does give standing to an agency or department as the primary coordinator for policy formulation in an emergency or crisis.[13] That primacy includes prioritization of any resources specifically appropriated for that particular issue. But that is where the given authority ends.

Other departments do not recognize (unless directed by the President) any authority to task for resources or personnel, and can at the direction of their senior leadership ignore or marginalize requested support. Why would a Cabinet-level leader divert discretionary resources and organizational energy from their designated core tasks to support another department? Unless mandated by the White House, perceived to enhance departmental performance, or viewed as a source of additional resources, these leaders won't.   Cultural bias drives them to stay fixated on the efficiency, effectiveness, and reach of their own domain. This is the crux in dealing with existing organizational cultural paradigms. As long as these paradigms remain, the USG cannot develop an operational interagency process that gives decision authority to one agency and yet accounts for the realities that Secretaries report directly to the President, are graded on departmental performance, and remain exclusively in control of their departmental resources.[14]

Personal experience in the domestic counterdrug campaign supports these assertions. The Department of Justice (DOJ) as the LFA for interdiction of narcotics expends enormous effort intercepting smugglers along the continental borders of the United States. Several presidents in the recent past characterized this threat from drug-trafficking as serious enough to be a threat to national security,[15] and assigned the Department of Defense to a supporting role for the designated LFA. That support role formalized with the creation of Joint Task Force Six in 1989, giving that organization responsibility for coordinating authorized Title X support to all domestic law enforcement agencies (LEAs) counter-narcotic initiatives.[16]

During Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Rumsfeld's early tenure in 2001, the Title X counterdrug focus moved from efficient support to domestic LEA programs to seeking a strategy

to permanently end the initiative.[17] Debate on changing national policy did not occur within the NSC nor was the policy redefined by the President, rather a Cabinet-level leader simply determined that the resources programmed to support that policy were not being used in the most effective manner. Mr. Rumsfeld's mind-set (based on organizational culture ingrained in him during a previous tenure as the SECDEF) was that although the department was tasked to support domestic LEAs, he retained discretion over the commitment of effort and resources. Given the absence of any fixed support level, the SECDEF felt within his right to reprioritize resources for his own department's requirements. Such an exercise of discretionary authority is not an issue, unless done (as in this case) without consideration of its impact on national policy.

Mr. Rumsfeld executed in essence a unilateral decision with wide-ranging security implications, yet never coordinated it through the interagency. The most immediate and worrisome result of that decision for LEAs was a complete desynchronization of their domestic drug interdiction strategy. The abrupt reality DOJ faced was that though appointed the LFA for this security challenge, they held no decision authority or influence on the outcome of the DOD review of its commitment. The Attorney General, as well as a number of LEA heads, expressed their concerns over the diminished support and its impact on border security, but that failed to spark an Oval Office review of DOD's determination to reduce assistance. The general acceptance by the NSC and White House of the Secretary's right to act autonomously in setting policy support levels to another cabinet-level leader reaffirms this analysis' contention that USG organizational culture "eats strategy for lunch."[18]

The dominance of organizational culture over strategy should not come as a surprise. Cultural supremacy is the unavoidable outcome of our democratic institutions' natural obedience to their behavioral norms, which predictably influence or even control decisions and actions. The government employees working inside the organizational establishment are not bad, selfish, or uncaring people. They are merely unaware of the influence that inherent cultural norms have on their corporate logic process. To change the predisposed outcome, enabling development of synchronized, interagency-driven security policy requires the USG first change its cultural framework. That is a difficult task.

Edgar Schein lays the phenomena out quite well in his published research on the implications and effects of organizational culture.[19] He depicts organizational behavior and decisionmaking as inevitably influenced by the values that a professional group holds as central to their moral and ethical code. The expression of those values through established norms (the informal rules that define behavior and logic processes) constrains the array of derived outcomes. In the case of the USG, the corporate body shares a comparatively universal set of

national security values that center on protection of American society, advancement of democracy, tradition of service, and loyalty. Those values determine the interagency framework for what is judged as good and bad policy within our governmental bureaucracy. The departure point in commonality for the institution is in how the interagency translates those values to collective group norms used to shape that same policy.

Inside the Executive branch, agency and departmental norms vary substantially in terms of process, rules, and behavior. The explanation for this dichotomy is that even within the USG organizational culture, there are actually subcultures that further affect behavioral norm expression. These subcultures, Edgar Schein points out, are a "subset of an organization's members who interact regularly with one another, identify themselves as a distinct group within the organization, share a set of problems commonly defined to be the problems of all, and routinely take action on the basis of collective understandings unique to the group."[20] Using this definition as a point for comparison, the primary players within the realm of national security are clearly distinctive subcultures.

The variance in expression of behavioral norms between agencies and departments is hardly a revelation to the interagency community at large. The Department of Defense's Joint Publication 3-08, which focuses on interagency coordination during operations, admonishes that there are significant cultural differences in the approach to coordination of security affairs. "Within a theater, the geographic combatant commander is the focal point for planning and implementation of regional and theater military strategies that require interagency coordination. In contrast, the DOS (*Department of State)* focal point for formulation and implementation of regional policy strategies requiring interagency coordination is the geographic bureau at DOS headquarters in Washington, DC."[21] The salient point is that DOD has a cultural norm that emphasizes a less centralized process of regional policy development than does DOS. Military failure to recognize and accommodate this difference while interacting with DOS will hamper both organizations' ability to achieve consensus on a strategy for a security issue.

Another example of conflicting behavioral norms illustrates an even deeper divergence within the Executive Branch on approaches to solving major security issues. For the Department of Defense, and State to a lesser degree, there exists capability to export expertise to troubled areas. Both organizations have had historical precedents for deploying at least limited operational capabilities forward to resolve crises. In the more recent arrivals to interagency operations abroad, that capability is absent. DOJ has export capability for only tactical level operations, as does Treasury. In the case of Commerce, Energy, and Homeland Security, there is a complete void. Traditional norms for these agencies deemed deploying that

level of expertise "out of their lane" or not mandated by the Oval Office as an agency requirement. In fact a recent study affirmed this position stating that after analyzing the USG interagency community it concluded there exists a "…lack of culture and/or capacity for planning in some agencies, and lack of capabilities for deploying and sustaining their expertise abroad; and a lack of adequate institutional linkages or mechanisms for coordinated planning at operational levels across departments and agencies.".[22]

The acceptance of an inability to export operational expertise as a cultural norm had an enormously detrimental effect on USG efforts to stabilize and reconstruct Iraq following the toppling of Hussein's regime in 2003. Many of the organizations with needed expertise had no means of deploying it, others went but without capability to translate information into actionable tasks or objectives necessary to creating strategy, and some erroneously believed they had no role at all. The outcome of this culturally produced paralysis was an interagency impasse on the operational strategy to achieve the directed political end state, no binding decision authority in Baghdad to assign reconstruction and stability tasks, and a military campaign plan with no support for its USG agencies entry and exit criteria. Worse yet, the void in country of interagency expertise to identify and address critical issues with Washington allowed dissonant senior leadership in the National Capitol Region (NCR) to unduly sway policy decisions based solely on opinion and political expediency. In the end, DOD's frustration over these conflicting cultural norms led it to taking charge of a complex operational spectrum that demanded a far greater skill set than it possessed.[23]

The disjointed process used by the USG to install and empower the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as the lead element in Iraq for policy development and planning illustrates the dysfunctional effects of unchecked organizational culture. The original decision by the President put DOS in the lead for reconstruction and stabilization (Phase IV of the military campaign), with much of their resultant energy devoted to the Future of Iraq (FOI) project. This initiative, done largely in isolation of the other agencies, relied on exiled Iraqis' to determine how best to regenerate infrastructure after Hussein's removal. The first interagency cultural clash occurred after DOD had its initial look at the document in preparation for revision of the CENTCOM OPLAN. Shocked military planners complained bitterly that though the FOI project provided comprehensive visions of end states, it lacked the components needed to operationalize into a detailed, task-oriented campaign plan.[24]

Exacerbating the desynchronization of the interagency's efforts, the SECDEF chose not to strive for better integration of the respective staffs' efforts and pressed instead for the President to reassign lead for Phase IV to DOD. His offer to accept full responsibility for the post-hostilities

outcome swayed the President to make the change.[25]   That Oval Office acquiescence to Mr. Rumsfeld's request effectively took DOS leadership out of the process until after the fall of Baghdad and dramatic rise of the insurgency. From that decisive point forward the cultural prejudices held by DOD towards State (slow, indecisive, and driven by relationships over objectives) shaped the military's mental framework for agency integrated operations, acceptance of inputs for planning, and perception of capability. Similarly, DOS officials resented DOD's "cold shoulder" towards their previous efforts to help craft a strategy; precipitating a mental withdrawal from seriously working the issue.[26]

Contrary to his strongly held belief, the SECDEF's successful wresting of authority for post-conflict operations did little to better synchronize interagency coordination. Ignoring the implications of the growing rift with DOS, Mr. Rumsfeld moved forward with the announcement of DOD's lead for the post-conflict effort. The first chosen was retired LTG Jay Garner, a former army officer with vast experience in the region.[27] He would head the new organization known as the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), assuming the task of translating political end states mandated by the President into reality. His tenure would be strikingly short.

Within DOD, subcultures and behavioral norms exist that differentiate between those in uniform who execute military tasks and those in civilian suits that oversee those activities. Military officers, both current and retired, habitually conform to a behavioral norm that opines "when placed in charge, be in charge." LTG Garner believed the SECDEF's appointment put him in charge, providing the authority to both develop and implement policy options so long as they met White House intent. Operating from that mental framework, his efforts centered on identifying leadership to quickly assume the reins of the Iraqi government, setting up elections, selecting Iraqis to revitalize the country's infrastructure, and lastly creating a stable environment to allow national recovery to occur.

That "take charge" behavioral norm precipitated a clash with senior OSD officials' premise that LTG Garner was not an independent thinker but an implementer of policy derived in Washington. They did not share Garner's view of this phase as a military operation requiring decentralized execution. Ultimately, OSD and the White House flatly rejected his strategy to use an interim exile government, hold elections within 90 days, use low-level Ba'ath party officials to oversee resumption of essential services, and gradually recall the Iraqi Army to assume a primary security role. With the cultural divergence so wide between Garner and OSD, the SECDEF made a change in leadership, bringing in a career diplomat that he believed would listen to Washington. His name was L. Paul Bremer.

With the selection of Bremer and change to CPA for lead in Iraqi reconstruction, Secretary Rumsfeld thought he had eliminated the cultural clashes that plagued his efforts to control the interagency. Mr. Bremer was a conservative and protégé of Henry Kissinger. As a DOS veteran, the SECDEF presumed Mr. Bremer would embrace having policy centrally managed in Washington and therefore less likely to advance independent initiatives.[28] Unfortunately, that cultural change so prized by Rumsfeld and other neo-conservatives brought about conflict yet again. Bremer's perception of his role as special envoy evoked ambassador-like behavior norms that clashed initially with theater military leaders as he introduced controversial policy (shooting looters, de-Ba'athification, and rebuild vice recall of the Army) and later with OSD as he sought to deal directly with the President (transfer of Iraqi sovereignty).[29] With these clashes came more fractured outcomes that became so severe that President Bush took the very public step of moving the CPA out from under DOD and released NSPD 44, restoring lead for reconstruction and stability to DOS as a core task.

The damaging effects of cultural prejudices on decisionmaking proved disastrous to U.S. hopes for a synchronized, interagency-supported reconstruction strategy in Iraq. The USG's senior leadership fell into the trap warned about in Joint Pub 3-08; complete failure to consider cultural norm variances between organizations. DOS had done what it was accustomed to, creating detailed reference information for use by other agencies to operationalize. The staff at State had no expertise in building operational campaign plans. Conversely, DOD expected military-style information products identifying specific tasks, conditions, and standards for post-conflict operations as well as metrics to monitor progress. When they didn't get it, their prejudices led them to reject what DOS offered out of hand. Beyond that, DOD fell victim even to differences in norms within their own organizational subcultures working the issues. The failure by these organizations to anticipate the methodology differences between the interagency actors transformed USG's efforts towards the future of Iraq from synchronized strategy to muddled disorder.

The Power of Education and Assignments

The premise that changing organizational culture is the most effective prescription for resolving interagency woes is not new. In fact, efforts to change the interagency's logic process by attacking its culture drew enormous attention over the last decade. President Clinton's 1997 Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 56 came about after the administration learned these same hard lessons during operations in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Northern Iraq. Focusing on "complex contingency operations" abroad that the directive anticipated being both multinational

and interagency supported, it required USG agencies capture lessons learned during these operations to improve future planning and management functions. The primary mechanism for harnessing these lessons in future planning occurred through the Deputies Committee of the NSC, which would form an executive committee to support the designated LFA in a contingency.[30] That committee also had responsibility for ensuring that any operation requiring a political-military solution had some form of interagency rehearsal. Long-term, the PDD established an annual interagency training requirement sponsored by the National Defense University (NDU), the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, and U.S. Army War College to create a corps of interagency mid-level professionals.[31]

PDD-56 was an excellent start for organizational culture change, addressing one of the macro influencers - education. Unfortunately, its limited scope on contingencies abroad did not consider domestic coordination issues such as defense of the homeland and consequence management. That constrained the PDD from touching the full spectrum of players that today are involved in dealing with these issues. For the NSC, it received responsibility for managing daily execution of contingencies but still lacked authority to enforce recommendations outside those taken to the President for decision. Finally, the mandates for education did not require physical integration of interagency programs, allowing training to continue occurring in a stovepipe fashion. Moreover, the training initiative failed to address senior management, which is precisely where support for the impetus to change culture must begin.

Like President Clinton, our current administration endured bitter educational experiences in interagency shortcomings both in Afghanistan and Iraq. President Bush's idea for bridging the cultural divide with education centered on training a core group of experts in reconstruction and stabilization operations. He formalized the vision in December 2005 with National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44. The directive however, targeted only one department, that being DOS. It formally assigned DOS a number of post-conflict tasks. The primary interagency ones included developing a deployable civilian response capability for reconstruction operations, capturing lessons learned for use in future contingencies, and identifying reconstruction issues for resolution by the NSC. To support these efforts, the President also mandated all executive departments and agencies designate senior USG officials to participate in appropriate task forces, planning and gaming drills, relevant training sessions, and after-action reviews. In a departure from past practice, the NSPD also required departments provide personnel to DOS on a non-reimbursable basis to support reconstruction and stabilization tasks as well as for personnel exchange programs to increase interoperability.[32]

Much like PDD 56, this effort by the present administration to change interagency culture was equally both noble and flawed. Realigning post-conflict operations under DOS, as well as requiring other federal agencies to contribute personnel in support of actual operations, made a bold attempt to strike directly at the heart of USG behavioral norms to protect "rice bowls." Unfortunately, embedded in the very same document was the escape clause to marginalize the initiative and sap it of any real ability to affect organizational culture change.

By using permissive phrases such as "when feasible", "as appropriate", and "coordinate", the NSPD undercut the legitimacy of binding decisionmaking needed within the NSC system. Departments continue to retain wide latitude and discretion to judge what is feasible or appropriate, and the power to coordinate does not compel reprioritization of resources or requirements. Leadership may still offer only token support if viewed as irrelevant to core tasks; defending the action by again pointing to the lack of mandated levels of assistance. With the NSC still the forum to work resolution of these interdepartmental issues, the NSA and interagency leaders are back to the unsuitable recourse of appealing to the President for arbitration when faced with uncooperative organizations or strong-willed personalities. Measuring the net effects, the NSPD is a marginal step forward in forcing strategic change to organizational bias.

It is unfair and inaccurate to characterize all federal leadership as indifferent to interagency cultural shortcomings. A number of organizations' hierarchy recognize the need to educate employees in interagency processes, the roles of their respective institution in shaping or planning policy, and capabilities resident in other federal departments. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) began offering a limited course curriculum to educate personnel outside DOS on its capabilities as well as a number of advanced degree programs that focus on conflict resolution as the focus of interagency study.[33] The Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security, and Justice have also begun to develop frameworks for education both internally and for interagency partners, targeted towards domestic counterterrorism programs and resident organic capabilities. Even the Department of Agriculture is working to advance interagency awareness through its graduate school website which offers a number of distance learning courses on capabilities of other organizations (predominantly Department of Homeland Security) and the nature of the Global War on Terrorism.[34]

The initiatives are admirable but fall short of the target. First, showcasing organic capabilities within an organization does not correlate to teaching the interagency how to employ those tools synergistically. Second, limited resources may drive organizations to development of online courseware as a cost-saving measure, but that educational medium will not address

the critical objective of using an academic environment to break down organizational prejudices. To overcomes bias necessitates face to face contact with "those guys and gals" from the other interagency partners. The ideal formula is to study interagency capabilities, then through simulation and table-top exercises force these groups to solve security-related issues together. That structured, personal exposure is what convinces people that talent exists outside their own organization, or that there are potent interagency tools readily available to address or complement organizational missions and goals. Those ingrained realizations erode the strength of counterproductive cultural mindsets.

With the greatest resources often come the greatest initiatives. The NDU is DOD's proponent for joint and interagency education. They understand the collaborative, face-to-face style of education needed to assail organizational culture from years of working to erode internal service prejudices. That cultivated expertise, coupled with relatively extensive fiscal resources, created a robust curriculum that superbly trains students to meld interagency capabilities for better synchronization of national power. Through their sponsored schools and colleges (National War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Joint Forces Staff College, and Information Resources Management College) NDU targets predominantly mid-grade and senior military leadership's top performers for prolonged exposure to theory and practical application of interagency tools as a means of redefining organizational culture and norms.[35] The NDU leadership expectations are that shown the value of a functional interagency construct, graduates will return to their services and counter the stereotypical jaundiced views that damage collaborative work. Assignment policies for graduates support the effort by programming many for extended joint or interagency assignments after completion.

Recognizing that limiting exposure to the interagency dynamic to just the upper tiers of military leadership slows the pace of organizational change, NDU went a step further and became active in developing open enrollment distant learning courses. These predominantly online computer courses focus on highlighting federal organizational disciplines and coordination across boundaries (Military 101, Interagency 101, and Joint Interagency Coordination Group 101).[36] In addition, they are reviewing a proposal for a week-long seminar to senior interagency leadership on the positive dynamics of the integration process to obtain strategic support within these organizations.[37]

The second component of the in-stride strategy to effective interagency operations is cross-department assignments. Studying capabilities and discussing ways to apply them against security challenges is just intellectual work. That theoretical piece of the initiative may start the campaign to erode organizational prejudices ingrained in the bureaucracy, but is just

temporary in effect if not reinforced in people's daily work. Cultural norms and prejudices are potent influences and to destroy their corrosive power demands repeatedly ingraining the theoretical concepts into personal operating precepts through experiential learning. That translates to assignments with other agencies and departments for a period long enough to extensively use the skills learned.

The staff positions available for cross-assignment exist at senior and middle management levels throughout every executive organization. In many cases these positions are manned by organic personnel versus interagency staff. A short list of examples include: the NSC staff, DOD staff, Joint Staff, Combatant Command staff, and in particular the Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs), as well as the numerous regional and functional bureaus within State, Treasury, Commerce, Energy, and Homeland Security. Each of these staff positions provides the experiential learning needed to permanently cement agency integration into the logic process.

The Department of the Army is already reviewing alternatives for implementing this exchange policy within their organization. Army Chief of Staff (CSA) General Schoomaker correctly concluded from enduring lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan that DOD can ill-afford to wait for other departments to commit to personnel exchanges. From his perspective, if agencies considered crucial to support of security operations abroad cannot export their expertise, than he will send people to their organizations to get it. The successful outcome of a contingency operation may depend on someone in uniform understanding the rudiments of those complementing interagency skill sets and how they support ground forces engaged in stability, security, and reconstruction operations (SSTRO).[38] This is an excellent example of how cultural change and internal reform occur when experientially educated leadership embraces the power of interagency integration. No coercing of the CSA to venture out on this initiative occurred; he supports the initiative because he believes it an organizational imperative to changing cultural mindsets for future operational success.

The most common rebuttal to a robust inter-assignment system is that agencies and departments outside DOD are already critically short personnel against current work requirements. These critics contend that are no uncommitted human resource pools available to detail employees for tasks beyond their respective core functions. Therefore, the rest of the federal bureaucracy must approach interagency functions and requirements as strictly additional duties and explains why these organizations are unable to meaningfully support integrated operations. DOS, for example, advertises that there are only 3500 Foreign Service Officers available to perform mandated diplomatic functions.[39] With political appointees ranging between

36-46% of the organization,[40] the argument postulates that stripping out any significant number of the core expertise for extended education or interagency assignments would have disastrous effects on organizational performance. Most other executive agencies assert they are in similar conditions and exchanges will not ameliorate the problem.

Unfortunately, the bottomline to this supportability debate is that Congress and the American people grow increasingly frustrated by tales of interagency ineptitude and the resulting missteps during security challenges this past decade. Despite the much publicized and repeated lesson that a successful interagency effort must integrate capabilities, the Executive Branch seems unable to resist the stovepipe business as usual approach immediately after a crisis concludes. Americans want no more excuses. Through their elected representatives in Congress, they provided the necessary structure and empowered the Executive Branch to act. They want results. If USG leaders continue to focus on reorganization as the solution to these mistakes, neglecting change to organizational culture, they risk continued miscalculation in security matters. If future challenges are serious enough, such miscalculation could sweep these leaders and their political parties from office. Worst case, it could result in unnecessary loss of lives and increased threat to America's vital interests.

Recommendations

Cultural change is essential to breaking the morass the interagency finds itself in today. The process for achieving this change must also occur in a resource constrained and VUCA environment as the United States continues its war against terrorism. That implies structurally reorganizing or redefining roles is neither feasible nor suitable. Education and interagency assignments remain the most effective answer.

To implement the integrated education system needed means reexamining the USG institutions that perform those services and consolidating wherever possible. This analysis advocates that given DOD's relative resource levels and expertise in developing curriculums proven to change cultural norms (joint mentality), the NDU system should form the baseline. Interagency educational institutions, like the FSI, that teach similar courses should cease offering them and reassign those instructors to NDU for inclusion into their faculty. For the course to be taking place now, agencies have already programmed and funded these teaching positions; making reimbursement a moot point. Realigning appropriations for subsequent years can occur in future budget submissions.

At the mid-grade management and leadership level, transform the Joint Forces Staff College into the Joint Interagency Staff College. The current nine-week curriculum already

focuses on the integration of national power, needing only minor modifications to expand in interagency operational capabilities and methods or "best practices" for synchronized planning. Additionally, the three practical exercises (in particular the capstone one dubbed Purple Warrior[41] which places the military in a supporting role) force students to demonstrate broad understanding of interagency precepts under stressful crisis conditions. As a graduate of the course, this author will validate that anyone completing it develops a true appreciation for the potency of integrated national power.

At the senior management levels, the NDU college system is again the standard-setter. Both of the primary schools focus their curriculum on the integration of national power and the nesting of military strategy into political context. Supplementing the instruction of these NDU organizations are the individual military services' war colleges. Superb educational institutions in their own rights, their learning objectives are not far removed from the ones proffered by NDU; but with a focus on their respective battle space domain. This author contends that the subtle nuances are insufficient to degrade efforts to shatter bureaucratic cultural norms in favor of the interagency mindset. So with these service colleges added to the mix, the funded system offers the opportunity to educate more than 1000 senior leaders across the USG spectrum annually. What a tremendous way to achieve that in-stride solution of maintaining expertise and functions within organizations, while simultaneously reshaping the mental start points of the people running them on a day to day basis!

The potential benefits of an interagency assignment system far outweigh the bad. As previously noted, the Army is already studying how best to embed a select number of its senior leadership within the interagency as a means of jumpstarting the change process. That effort will generate its own momentum, with other military services following. The balance of the other federal agencies will also join after experiencing the benefits from this infusion of new talent. To properly prepare their personnel and sustain organizational reputations for competence, leaders will conclude that they must expose their personnel to interagency education. At that point, the system feeds off of itself and will steadily break down antiquated norms and mindsets, replacing them with an interagency perspective that produces positive results.

The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) is an excellent example for highlighting potential value added. DOD, using the Army as its executive agent, will invest people into this organization to make it more effective. It doesn't matter that it's for the self-serving purpose of ensuring the Army avoids the burdens associated with managing post-conflict operations. The end state is still an integrated effort between the two biggest agents in SSTRO. With these significant and talented plugs of

personnel, both DOS and DOD cannot help but develop a more common method to approaching security issues. Moreover, the recognition will also come that by embedding personnel in COCOM staffs, DOS and other federal departments will get early jumps on identifying future crises requiring their participation as well as providing venues to help shape U.S. operational involvement. Taking part in the process now will save State, Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, and Treasury the pain of uncoordinated tasks thrust at them during future operations. After a decade of that type of interagency coordination and synchronization, our security policy will suffer from far fewer mistakes.

Conclusion

The ineffective interagency process in use by the Executive Branch to integrate elements of national power will continue to be this country's greatest obstacle to achieving its security interests. The solution is neither structural reform nor a redefinition of roles and responsibilities through legislation. The security environment that confronts America will not allow the remodeled organizations that emerge time to build a common framework for needed operating processes. Radical reform measures such as these present too much risk to American vital interests.

Cultural reform is the least risky and radical way to make the incremental or in-stride changes needed. The means employed for this strategy are education and assignment. Using NDU's collegiate system as the baseline, with the military services' war colleges to expand capacity, this option destroys cultural prejudice and behavioral norms that impede the development of a true interagency mindset. The face to face, personal contact style of the academic curriculum will give opportunities to discard bureaucratic parochialism and objectively evaluate the capabilities and talents of other federal organizations. Through the exercises and daily contact with personnel, the theory will become tangible and easier to understand.

Ideally, graduates of this educational initiative move on to assignments in interagency organizations, forming through experiential learning, enduring conclusions that an integrated agency approach always provides a better solution. That new premise or "interagency mindset" travels back with these future organizational leaders to their parent entities, delivering the death blow to the archaic approach traditionally used.

The use of education and interagency assignments as the primary tools to redefining the interagency process may take time to realize, but this method will bring about an inexorable transformation within the USG. The bureaucracy knows that the American voter demands something change after the black-eyes dealt by Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The

indirect approach advocated is less threatening to turf and power, so much less likely to invoke hierarchical defenses against the initiative until the point where the momentum achieved is impossible to reverse. As a colleague noted, the aging federal work force will require a vast infusion of new talent and that gives the USG a brief opportunity to capitalize on the turnover by breaking the old cultural paradigms with the creation of a true interagency environment.[42]

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