



THE HENRY L.
STIMSON CENTER

**IMPROVING THE INTERAGENCY
PROCESS TO FACE 21ST CENTURY
SECURITY CHALLENGES**

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WITH OLGA ROMANOVA**

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October 2005

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the U.S. Army's Dwight D. Eisenhower National Security Series and the Henry L. Stimson Center, we are pleased to provide this short report on an enduring challenge for U.S. national security: how security professionals in our large and complex bureaucracy can learn to work together, across disciplines and institutional boundaries, for the goals of more effective policymaking and implementation. In recent years, there have been a large number of special commissions and task forces looking at reforming the national security bureaucracy, due to criticisms and demands for change that came out of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003. We applaud that work, and believe there are many good ideas in circulation that would lead to improved coordination and communication in the U.S. system.

We now offer our contribution to this continuing conversation. In May 2005, we convened a prestigious group of former and current practitioners with vast experience in diplomacy, military, and intelligence. The group discussed, over a day-long workshop, the key topics of:

- is the interagency system broken? If so, how?
- what are some basic, realistic ways to improve interagency cooperation in the field and in Washington, D.C.?
- do Iraq and Afghanistan provide useful new insight into what works and what does not?
- how can training of national security professionals be improved or revised to strengthen the interagency process yet retain the key specialized skills our government needs?

We hope you will find this summary of the discussion and a few additional essays by workshop participants of value. We'll welcome hearing from you if you'd like to share your comments.

Sincerely,

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Captain John Prior, U.S. Army
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MAY 12, 2005

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* Biographic information is current as of May 2005.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

In May of 2005, the Henry L. Stimson Center, in conjunction with the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Security Series, convened a diverse panel of security professionals to discuss ways to improve interagency processes in light of changing national security requirements and capabilities. The panelists assessed the current status of interagency cooperation and considered a number of recommendations for the policy-making community to consider. It considered an ambitious, strategic restructuring of the national security system, but focused principally on more modest and practical improvements to interagency practice, training and communications.

The Goldwater-Nichols model: the view at 50,000 feet? In the last two years, two presidential commission reports have highlighted an enduring problem: traditional agency boundaries continue to impede horizontal dissemination of vital information and create barriers to effective policy formulation and action. Therefore, both the *9/11 Commission Report* and the *Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction*¹ recommended that the National Security Act of 1947, which founded the National Security Council and defined the national security missions of the Executive Branch departments, be revised, if not rewritten.

Many advocate using the model of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 to reform and restructure the interagency process. The Goldwater-Nichols Act sought to empower the inter-service military community by providing unified authority to senior officers. The provisions of the law triggered inter-service coordination and a more integrated chain of command, with service chiefs working as a unit in a system of clearly delineated joint authority. The law also created a joint Personnel Education System as well as an elite core of joint professional officers. Though strongly resisted at first, the changes significantly improved planning and operational efficiency of the military establishment and eventually garnered officer support for inter-service cooperation by creating and promoting career incentives for collaboration and cross-training. It had both top-down and bottom-up provisions, dealing both with decision-making at the leadership level, and training and professional development at more junior levels of the military services.

¹ Full texts of these two reports can be found at www.9-11commission.gov and www.wmd.gov.

Those who argue that Goldwater-Nichols is a useful paradigm for improving the civilian interagency process emphasize the need to enhance institutional communication and interoperability within, between and among federal agencies dealing with all aspects of national security. They seek an integrated command structure for agencies as diverse as the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, the Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense. Workshop participants questioned whether bodies whose “cultures”, core missions and modes of operation differ so much could be aligned under one chain of command. Efforts to impose some of the successful aspects of the Goldwater-Nichols model on the civilian interagency system will not necessarily create the efficiencies and operational synergies that could be achieved for the military community. Panelists also alluded to some of the unintended or unanticipated costs of implementing Goldwater-Nichols, principal among them the loss of deep specialization and the erosion of core institutional identity within each of the services, as career officers spend a large percentage of their time outside their “home” institution.

IS THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS BROKEN?

Some panelists challenged the popular view that the interagency system is broken. Despite the occasional shortcomings and inadequacies of the interagency process for national level decision-making in Washington, practitioners were clear that cooperation among various departments working in the field occurs far more frequently and efficiently. Country Teams at U.S. Embassies abroad create an environment where officers from agencies across the national security community collaborate to achieve common objectives.

The panel identified four aspects of field experience that work, and that underscore the view that interagency cooperation in Washington is simply harder than in the field. First of all, joint teams operating in the field benefit from a *unifying purpose*. In Washington, interagency meetings are often forums for one agency to seek cooperation from other departments on issues that the originating agency “owns,” field officers habitually perceive their role as a value added towards a unifying goal. In other words, in Washington, each agency strives to elevate its own *raison d'être*, while in the field, officers work for the common objective of the Mission. As a result, even in situations where Washington does not coordinate the instructions stemming from each parent department, the succeeding field actions do in fact become synchronized at the ground level of interagency cooperation.

Secondly, field officers generally operate under the *unifying authority of the Chief of Mission*, whose leadership guides joint efforts. Panelists concede that some Ambassadors are more effective than others

at instilling a shared sense of mission. Some missions abroad in fact serve multiple national security objectives, some beyond the bilateral relationship with the host country, that are therefore beyond the complete control and authority of the Ambassador.

When compared to Washington, the efficiency of interagency work at various field offices additionally reaps the *advantage of operating on a significantly reduced scale*. Each Mission has the opportunity to designate clearly its objectives and stipulate an interagency plan of action to achieve these aims. At most embassies, an economy of scale greatly enhances cross-disciplinary and interagency awareness and familiarity, allowing informal networks and personal relationships to strengthen cooperation and improve outcomes.

- One example from the post 9-11 world is how intelligence, law enforcement and diplomacy need to keep each other informed: “Is the one guy that the Treasury Department is about to issue a warrant on, on somebody else’s payroll?”
- An ambassador serving in a country adjacent to Iraq during the rapid buildup of military forces prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 cleared out a floor of the Embassy for the US military expansion, rather than have the military set up a separate operation in a different location that would have impeded communication and coordination with the Embassy’s civilian leadership.

Finally, offices abroad stimulate a strong *sense of community as a result of cultural isolation*, and more importantly, due to the proximity of interagency representatives working in a confined, close environment. Through increased personal interactions, officers acquire a level of trust for the representatives of other agencies, thus becoming more open to possibilities of constructive interagency cooperation.

- One Ambassador who was Chief of Mission during the East African bombings described the remarkable healing and recovery within the mission that was enhanced by the bonds of living together in a remote place, and the trust between the team and the leadership regarding making sure that Washington understood their needs and their situation.

Workshop participants conceded that the Country Team concept does not operate productively at all Embassies and offices abroad. In addition to its dependence on effective leadership of the Chief of Mission, the ground component of the interagency process experiences frequent setbacks when Washington’s problems are transported into the field. As an example of this tendency, the panel cited occasions when agency principals specifically instructed their subordinate field officers not to cooperate with the representatives of other departments.

Overall, the panel encouraged further examination of success stories occurring on the ground. Innovative means of cooperation emerging from the field often do not get sufficient attention when interagency reform measures are considered, as has been the case in the post 9-11 period. The panelists generally felt that the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the reorganization of the intelligence community are unlikely to solve the most critical challenges of the interagency process, namely, improved information sharing, shared sense of mission, and capacity to act quickly and in an integrated way to acute, crisis generated security requirements. While DHS and the new Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) may create some improved processes within those two bureaucratic cultures, there is no sense that it will make coordination and integration of effort across the interagency any easier or more efficient.

FEATURES OF INTERAGENCY PROCESS REFORM

The panelists identified a number of key features for policy-makers to consider in designing additional reform initiatives.

The panel argued for more reflection on the key issues of authority and accountability. Many believe that *authority* is the most important factor to address in reforming the Interagency Process. With the increasing frequency of ad hoc interagency formulas not fully embedded in one institution, the question arises: which department leads the task force, defines the character of the joint team, makes the hard choices, and is held responsible for its success or failure? For example, in a team led by a CIA officer, would personnel from the Departments of Defense and State feel obliged to carry out orders? Or would interagency teams require joint leadership to make sure that separate personnel systems would recognize the task and enforce incentives in the same way? In other words, future reorganization plans should determine where the authority would lie in governmental interagency groups, thereby avoiding the creation of amorphous forces that belong to no one.

From the micro-organizational perspective, the broader topic of authority can be further dissected into three subcomponents of *authorization, authority, and accountability*. Speaking from the viewpoint of the Department of Defense, one panelist explained that when DOD felt overstretched by its reconstruction agendas in Iraq and Afghanistan, it sought assistance in the form of an interagency cooperative effort. Regrettably, the interagency structure could not support these requests. The personal assessment of a panelist concluded that out of 1,500 federal employees engaged in Iraq's reconstruction at a given time,

only ten officers possessed expert knowledge and were willing to serve for a period of time exceeding several months. The component agencies did not have necessary authorization to generate task forces, or “operationalize” a traditionally non-operational entity, such as sending analysts to support a paramilitary effort to search for weapons and information about weapons. In order to operate effectively in the field, the panelists recommended that each interagency group possess the level of authority required to dispatch joint operations in times of crisis. Finally, joint oversight of unified operations must exist with the intention of protecting individuals serving in interagency decision-making capacities and ensuring that all undertaken actions are legal, legitimate, and fiscally supported.

The panel subsequently raised the issue of *communication and information technology*. Often during crisis deployments, the lack of horizontal communication remains a critical issue, despite the availability of faster communications links between Washington and the field. Sometimes the availability of email and cellphones can, paradoxically, create new breakdowns in communication, by allowing individuals to let their home office know what is happening, bypassing more formal formats requiring senior officer approval that can be shared electronically across the interagency community. It takes high levels of discipline to inform a group of people, all of whom legitimately seek a given piece of information.

In addition information security concerns continue to impede smooth communications, regardless of the status of the interagency team, task force, working group, etc. The sensitivity of CIA operations requires the existence of added information security firewalls, even when they are working alongside other agencies that have a need to obtain particular data but may not have proper background clearances to access that information. Moreover, as demonstrated by thus-far unsuccessful attempts to develop an effective intelligence function within the Federal Bureau of Investigation that can hold its own at the interagency level, mere replication of certain capabilities does not overcome the inherent “cultural” differences of each home agency’s operational objectives.

Future reorganization proposals must also present *incentives* for participation in joint programs. Otherwise, if only an officer’s home agency carries the ability to promote or offer other career incentives, prospective interagency recruits will feel compelled to abstain from outside assignments. At the same time, if the Interagency Process forces department leadership to contribute personnel to a joint assignment, few will eagerly contribute their strongest officers. Some pointed out, for example, that the newest fad, JIACGs (Joint Interagency Coordination Groups) deployed as mini-interagency teams to military commands, only work if the personnel deployed have bosses who support and value the assignment, are willing to use information from the deployed officer up the chain of command in the

civilian agency, and make the assignment career-enhancing, not a detour from a normal career progression. It is also clear that such new integrated teams are not intended to replace the Washington decision making process, although in the heat of a crisis, an empowered military commander may expect a mid-ranking civil servant on a JIACG to be able to speak authoritatively for his or her department.

Should reform of the interagency process and mechanisms advance, Congress will need to consider its own committee structure and how to provide appropriate oversight to new arrangements, which may be hybrids, ad hoc, and require a lot of flexibility in funding and authority. The recent experience of standing up the Department of Homeland Security was not inspiring in terms of Congress' willingness to realign its own power structure to provide efficient and constructive oversight. New committees with weak authority were created, but DHS officers are now required to appear before dozens of committees and subcommittees. Panelists referred to the poor congressional understanding of the State Department's Office for Coordination for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). A clear response to the deficit of civilian capacity in post-war Iraq reconstruction, Congress has declined to give the new office sufficient funds to develop that capacity, and has said that it will authorize funding for acute, active contingencies, not for sustained planning and capacity-building. In this case, the military was largely supportive of transferring responsibility (and even some resources) to the State Department, but even in the face of interagency consensus for the new function, Congress reverted to its familiar patterns and was not willing to take the risk of funding this new activity in a nontraditional way.

Likewise, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) should aim to provide future unified missions with a degree of fiscal autonomy. At times of crisis, appropriate interagency coordination mechanisms should possess the means to manage joint tasks and avoid reliance on a promise of future allocations from their home agencies, or from a designated lead agency. A panelist suggested that OMB must see itself as part of the integrated team and perhaps even establish permanent field representation in complex operations (such as reconstruction of Iraq). Departing from its clinical evaluation of federal allocations, OMB should attempt to understand the priorities of each multi-faceted mission and be capable of displaying a degree of flexibility. Ideally, OMB should be able to look at joint budgets that support integrated strategic campaign plans involving multiple agencies and actors.

THE RISING DEMAND FOR INTERAGENCY OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

The aftermath of Iraq, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's call for "transformational diplomacy," and requirements for post-conflict deployments of complex peace operations that have both civilian and military components call for changes in how the national security system works to achieve current policy goals overseas. The interagency system has been experimenting with different ad hoc responses to these challenges; some workshop participants hoped that greater sharing of lessons from the field could be captured and disseminated, and that Washington would more robustly support new mechanisms and institutional responses to these new and enduring requirements. Others questioned whether the shortcomings of post-war reconstruction in Iraq are in fact likely to be repeated elsewhere, and whether the solution should be found in greater empowerment to the field commander, military or civilian, to design a system that works for each particular contingency. Yet another view was that one can achieve greater coordination yet still not produce more effective policy outcomes; sometimes it's the policy, not the process.

The workshop panelists advised that even if representatives of national security agencies accept the requirement for collaboration in the field, few results will be achieved until a common purpose is acknowledged on a national level. Some argued that the US public would not support the development of anything like the former British Colonial Office, with its related training and operational capacity, and that, therefore, Iraq might be the last ambitious state-building exercise for some time. Others thought it likely that the United States will face future contingencies that would entail complex civil-military deployments, but that the US government had failed to come to terms with its global role and had not planned effectively for the range of responsibilities that has emerged in the single superpower age.

One panelist recounted the poignant example of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) relying on World War II manuals on reconstruction in Japan for its efforts in Iraq. While not dismissing the value of lessons learned from past experience, the scale of reconstruction efforts in Iraq should have been supported by a more robust infrastructure that could gauge the requirements of each task and adequately fulfill those needs in a timely, efficient manner. The thinness of manpower properly trained for reconstruction and the difficulty of finding civilians with the right skills to deploy to Iraq were sources of frustration and embarrassment to career diplomats and civil servants.

A panelist with personal experience in Iraqi reconstruction contended that in order to achieve efficient interagency cooperation, true divisions of labor must be upheld. The chronic imbalance of resources

favoring the military over civilian functions has led the Department of Defense to embark on tasks that stretch outside its core competencies. Moreover, the pendulum of interagency work on Iraq has swung from the extreme of no evident cooperation, to the other extreme of endless meetings, committees, etc. Despite this shift, the Washington community has failed to designate any clear lines of authority, thus minimizing the capabilities and the overall role of these cooperative efforts.

The topic of rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq yielded another broad subject for discussion. Concurring that the Civil Affairs Division of the US Army did not offer the optimal reconstruction mechanism, the panel examined whether a new organizational paradigm would be needed to staff deployable civilian teams. Instead of keeping thousands of employees on the payroll, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) should develop a database of experienced professionals, which include former Department of Defense officers, retired Department of State personnel, USAID field experts, reserve officers with desired civilian expertise, etc. Borrowing the human resource management formula from the private sector, S/CRS should plan to find the preferred talent, offer short-term contracts and provide a competitive compensation in order to assemble qualified personnel to lead its task forces. Several panelists, though, noted that institutionalization of this mechanism would generate new questions of accountability, liability and principle.

Panelists were uncertain whether S/CRS would emerge as the key player in developing these personnel and planning requirements. There seemed to be competing ideas about the office's basic mission: is it to actually do the work or just to facilitate the planning process within the bureaucracy? While the public professes its disapproval of an American "Colonial Office," discussions about a role for S/CRS in Sudan, Cuba and other "failing nations" float around the Washington community. Funding is not assured, and significantly more resources would be needed for this office to assume leadership of planning and execution for such interventions.

Reform of the interagency process cannot be limited to acute issues such as post-conflict reconstruction or crisis deployment. Effective department cooperation can serve more routine and sustained policy matters. The panel saw room for improvement within the larger interagency community to encourage collaboration of experts on issues such as HIV, global health, economic reform, environment, and the growing roster of transnational concerns that often draw on expertise beyond the traditional national security community.

INTERAGENCY STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The workshop considered a number of approaches to strengthening interagency capacity through training. Panelists spoke about the need to cross-train or prepare national security professionals in different disciplines for “joint” assignments or to work effectively in the interagency environment. Most believed that a new training institution was not warranted, and interagency skills could be added to existing professional schools, with more emphasis on such training at the higher level institutions or courses designed for senior officers at the war colleges, the foreign service training programs, and the newly established Intelligence University, comprised of distinct schools for the different intelligence disciplines.

Some attention was given to the possibility of a new career path for senior officers, who would exist as an interagency cadre, no longer anchored in one institution. Some saw great utility in having a proven group of “joint” officers function as an independent body with its own leadership and funding, possibly overseen and supported by the Office of Personnel Management. Others found this too radical an idea, and one that would be difficult to win the trust and support of the larger core agencies where the power to implement policies resides.

The panel considered several alternative paths for staff development that would improve interagency cooperation and build more familiarity and trust among peers during their careers in parallel national security arenas.

- One proposal would have each home institution designate its own interagency career development path that is as equally valid and professionally appealing as the other existing specialist tracks.
- One approach for the now common practice of rotations to other agencies would be a three year program, one year in another agency, the second year assigned to an interagency task force or working group, and the third year back in the home agency with interagency liaison responsibilities. A variation on this approach would be a year in a different part of one’s own institution (for example, an analyst rotates to the operations side in intelligence, or a political officer rotates to an economic position), then an outside assignment. This simple formula could be emulated across the system, and be a standard requirement for promotion to senior ranks.
- To support the recruitment of the strongest talent, the interagency rotation should constitute a highly competitive process that also provides career mobility for the officers who return to their

respective home offices after interagency-related absences. The panel considered the Army's Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program. Foreign Service officers were strongly supportive of the FAO concept, and considered it one of the strongest vehicles to promote civilian-military cooperation, but the group was aware that FAOs often are not rewarded, and do not seem to be recognized as senior leadership talent within their home services. The civilian agencies also report shortcomings in how returning officers fare after interagency assignments.

- Staff development also requires special training that does not take talented officers off-line for long periods of time. The interagency community could encourage short-term interagency workshops, designed to build special skills in addition to encouraging joint cooperation and “cultural” trust. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell introduced mandatory leadership training for all employees in GS 12-15 grades, and the War Colleges continue to conduct short-term courses for interagency participants.
- The national security agencies need to pay more attention and allocate more resources to retain acquired skills such as language and technology skills.
- The group also recognized the importance of pre-government experiences in the non-government sector; service abroad as journalists, humanitarian workers, teachers, etc. is often not recognized as useful, career enhancing experience. The mix of skills needed for “transformational” diplomacy suggests that greater attention to these attributes would build a stronger and more agile workforce.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Finally, the panel weighed whether there were invisible costs to promoting interagency training. Experts now recognize that the emphasis on “jointness” has taken its toll on deep specialization within the military services. There is a loss of core competencies that can weaken the capacity of the home agency to perform its distinct mission. Some asked what would history look like if MacArthur had not spent all of his time in the Pacific, and Patton did not dedicate his professional life to Europe? The group called for a careful effort to balance specialization and interagency mobility; the government needs both. Enhancing the interagency process through better allocation of resources, improved training and professional exchanges, and a leadership-driven sense of shared mission will lead to more effective policymaking and policy implementation, but the diversity and distinct character of different parts of the national security community must also be preserved.

– INNOVATIONS IN INTERAGENCY COOPERATION: THE IRAQ SURVEY GROUP CASE –

CHARLES DUELFER

The Iraq Survey Group was a unique mix of all elements of the intelligence community forward deployed to achieve a clear objective. It offers some illustrations of how interagency groupings may work more effectively.

The ISG was constituted following the invasion and occupation of Iraq in the spring of 2003. Pre-war Intelligence estimates judged that Iraq had stocks of both chemical and biological agent and that Saddam might well use these stocks against US forces once he understood his regime was threatened. US forces deployed with chemical protection gear and anthrax shots.

Pre-war CENTCOM planning provided for a special unit, the 75th Expeditionary Task Force, to go after suspected WMD sites. As the war progressed, this unit hop-scotched around Iraq looking for stocks of CW, BW, and production facilities. It did not find any. In May, after the fall of Baghdad, leaders in Washington became concerned that this approach to finding WMD was not working and a different mechanism was needed. Reacting to White House concerns, Secretary Rumsfeld and Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet agreed that a new group would be created drawing upon all DOD agencies and assets. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director Admiral Lowell Jacoby named Major General Keith Dayton to be in charge of assembling the necessary military and other elements. It was agreed that the CIA would provide the strategic and analytic leadership through the provision of a Senior Advisor to the DCI for Iraq WMD. This became the Iraq Survey Group (ISG).

A substantial budget and manpower commitment was made. In addition, the approach shifted from one driven by concern for force protection from anticipated weapons stocks, to pursuing an overall investigation.

The WMD investigation of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) lasted from June 2003 until December 2004. A final comprehensive report was completed in March 2005. The success of the ISG in acquiring a full understanding of the Iraq WMD programs and the policies of the former regime toward WMD contrasted sharply with the clear failures to understand the WMD programs before the war. This article will note some of the features of the ISG as a unique intelligence collection and analysis organization that fostered

its success. It will also note some of its problems. It is not likely that an organization precisely mirroring the ISG will happen again, however, some of the unique aspects of ISG's experience could inform new or ongoing interagency missions.

TOP LEVEL ATTENTION AND A CLEAR MISSION

From the start, the ISG had the attention and support of the White House, Secretary of Defense, and DCI. The President regularly inquired of ISG progress during the daily intelligence briefings. Congress also followed the work closely and support was evident from both the armed services and intelligence committees. Moreover, no one disputed the mission or the independence of the leadership of the DCI's Special Advisor². These factors combined to allow substantial resource and personnel support without disputes over direction or conclusions. There was little obstruction from mid or even senior levels in the various bureaucracies participating. It was clear that if a reasonable request by the DCI's Special Advisor was delayed or fought, then it would soon become a White House or Secretary level issue. At those levels, there was commitment to support the effort and, as National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said, "Let the chips fall where they may."

Another important effect of this top-level support was that personnel provided from the various agencies knew they were supporting a team effort that their own agency heads wanted accomplished. It was not an interagency team in name only. All of the players worked together and left bureaucratic fights at home.

This same top-level support pertained to the international participants as well. ISG was not just an interagency effort, but an international one as well. This required a bit more effort on the part of the DCI Special Advisor to keep London and Canberra confident in the effort. They suffered the very peculiar circumstance of being politically quite vulnerable to the fact that the report was written by the American CIA's Special Advisor for his own government. However, it worked because the effort was tasked with finding the reality on the ground and all participants basically were committed to accepting the facts as they turned out.

Nevertheless, keeping multinational support in each of the participating states required keeping all capitals informed. An extremely useful tool was weekly secure video teleconferences with key players in all capitals. The Deputy DCI, John McLaughlin, chaired this from Washington, but the agenda was

² David Kay served as DCI Special Advisor in Iraq from June-November 2003; Charles Duelfer served as the Special Advisor from January 2004 until April 2005.

usually set by the DCI Special Advisor in Baghdad. Capitals knew what was going on, where things were headed and were apprised of any upcoming requests or issues. In addition to this process, the DCI Special Representative regularly stopped in London for consultations, and visited and visited Canberra to brief senior levels with Major General Dayton.

DECISION-MAKING AUTONOMY IN THE FIELD

Derivative of the top-level backing was the ability for the ISG to make decisions in the field quickly and within the frame of reference of the ISG's objectives. Strategies, tactics and operations were developed and implemented very quickly in the field. This meant the interagency participants were thinking and acting daily for the goals of the ISG, not their parent agency.

A NEW INTEGRATED INTELLIGENCE MODEL

The great divide between analysts and collectors was reduced and even disappeared at ISG. This was a huge benefit. For example, operations officers worked side-by-side with analysts so they knew exactly what information was needed and from what individuals. At times, operatives and analysts met together with a contact in the field, assuring that the right questions were asked and nuances were not lost. Likewise, technical collection officers were collocated with the analysts, constructing the overall picture. National Security Agency (NSA), National Geospatial Intelligence Center (NGIC), and other officers worked side-by-side with substantive experts. This reduced the delays between identifying the required information and developing and executing a plan to acquire it.

For analysts, this was a particularly good opportunity because they usually prepare their analytic products without any real contact with the subject. Before the war, very few of the analysts writing assessments on Iraq had ever been there or even spoken with an Iraqi. Their information came from reports viewed on computer screens. There is nothing like getting a tactile feel for the subject. It empowers the analysts and gives them more confidence.

Operations officers saw the direct results of the information they acquired. They helped put the material they collected into the report that would be presented to the White House, Congress and the rest of the world.

Most importantly, both types of personnel worked under a single manager on a daily basis with a clearly laid out objective. Virtually all personnel had regular contact with management. Their training as one or another type of officer was not their primary identity. Their primary identity was as a member of the ISG.

RE-ORIENTATING ANALYTIC VIEWPOINT

ISG developed a methodology which required analysts to shift their perspective to that of the objective. In the case of ISG, this was Saddam. We built a room with one wall entirely covered with a four foot by twenty foot timeline chart. Plotted on that timeline were any events that were important to the Iraqi regime (such as funding available under the Oil for Food program, key decision points in their WMD program, geopolitical events, etc). The objective was to understand the picture of the world Saddam saw when he made key decisions on WMD and to understand his experience base up to that point in time. Analysts tried to understand his viewpoint and set aside their own assumptions.

For the best analysts, this then allowed them to understand what they were hearing from detainee debriefings better and, indeed, to better shape their questioning of detainees and other Iraqis. Other analysts found it very difficult to let go of their own worldview. Some could not enter the Iraqi field of view, and faltered in examining evidence. They looked for what was “logical,” not appreciating that their assumptions shaped what they thought was logical. For example, it is second nature for many to make assumptions based on what we call cost/benefit analysis. If there are two ways of doing something, it is “logical” to pursue only the one which is less expensive. This is not necessarily the case in Iraq, especially when funds were flowing and there were features of the Iraqi bureaucracy that shaped program and resource decisions.

For some analysts, finding themselves suddenly in Iraq with all the available possibilities for gathering data and posing questions was overwhelming. The transition from a cubicle and computer screen to the field left them feeling agoraphobic. Some took refuge in trying to simply test their pre-war assessments. The DCI Special Advisor had to stamp out these tendencies since pre-war assessments were largely irrelevant to the task of “simply” finding the truth.

The system of re-orientating thinking to the general task, however, worked for most and helped build a team perspective. It also encouraged testing and retesting of hypotheses. The ISG mission was akin to a homicide investigation. The unifying principle for the team was to develop understanding of an event. The unifying principle was neither a process nor membership in a particular agency. This turned out to be

a powerful factor, especially considering the different types of people involved: soldiers, spies, scientists, interrogators, photo-interpreters, technicians, etc.

The process of re-centering the analytic mindset to a Baghdad perspective benefited from the ability to test notions with key Iraqis—including Saddam. In the drafting of the key element of the Comprehensive Report on Iraq's WMD, describing the regime intentions, we tested the conclusions with senior Iraqis—even to the point of asking them to review draft text. This increased confidence in something which might otherwise have been considered conjecture.

UNIQUE PRODUCT LINE FOR A UNIQUE REQUIREMENT

The ISG was developing its own product. It had the freedom to shape its procedures and formats to suit the task. This allowed more creativity. However, the ISG had to contend with the standard intelligence community procedures for recording intelligence reports. This system fosters and rewards the generation of reports (of varying quality) on bits of information derived from assets or debriefings. Numbers of reports are rewarded and the system tends to reward the production and accumulation of a large number of “intelligence reports”. It does not necessarily foster or reward the accumulation of understanding. The ISG had to develop a mechanism for building understanding of the target, both in terms of a living document that eventually became the Comprehensive Report of the DCI Special Advisor and in terms of sustaining expertise. This later point was only partially successful in the ISG.

CHALLENGES

The greatest problem in the ISG was simply getting true experts and keeping them for a sustained period of time. Analysts and collectors, for the most part, did not want to remain in Iraq. Only a few (and they were vital) stayed over the long haul. Many came out only for a couple months, just long enough to begin to become familiar and then left. Corporate memory was difficult to build and sustain. This is also a problem in the normal interagency process in Washington.

To a certain extent, there simply were not many real experts in Iraq WMD (who weren't Iraqis). Moreover, often government intelligence experts were not keen to come out to Baghdad for extended periods of time. The result, and this is a tidal change in the intelligence bureaucracy generally, was that analytic and even operational positions were filled to a very large extent by contractors. This tendency

has implications beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice it to say that interagency missions take on different characteristics when the participants are (highly paid) contractors.

In some cases, when immediate issues of importance to the theater commander came up, there were requests to redirect some of the ISG assets to other issues—e.g. counter-terrorism missions. The first Special Advisor, David , Kay objected to this. Duelfer’s experience was different. He allocated resources to certain efforts aimed at thwarting insurgent attempts to acquire and use chemical munitions drawing upon former regime expertise.

In summary, the ISG successfully drew together a wide range of talent from a wide range of agencies in three countries. They were unified in purpose and enjoyed the strong advantage of unified and strong backing from their home organizations. The interagency competitions and conflicts natural in Washington were virtually non-existent in Baghdad. The experience was unique, however, and not likely to be repeated. Nevertheless, some elements of the ISG effort could be lifted for managers of interagency policy or other functional teams in Washington or in the field. Fundamentally, the key to the success of ISG was organizing around a defined and agreed mission. Too often government organizes around a function and this breeds organization competition when leaders try to use existing functional organs to achieve their priority mission objectives.

– THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS ABROAD: THE AMBASSADOR IS THE KEY –

EDWARD GNEHM

A broad interagency coordination works --- in some contrast to the Washington scene. Officials of all agencies working in embassies often note the difference and bemoan the lack of dialogue in Washington. Why is this so? What are the elements that make things work abroad? The answer is inherent in the close proximity in which people work abroad, their daily engagement with the leaders and issues in the country where they are serving, and, finally but most importantly, the pivotal leadership role the Ambassador plays as head of the Country Team.

The traditional adage is that “Washington makes policy while our missions abroad are the implementers.” Even though modern communications and technology have blurred somewhat this vintage distinction, our government personnel who serve abroad are the faces most often seen in foreign government offices and are the people who interact daily with the citizens of other countries. There is no substitute for this personal interface.

Most personnel assigned abroad recognize that the interagency coordination works far better in the field than in Washington. There are several factors that cannot be replicated in Washington that produce this success. First, in most posts representatives of different agencies work in close proximity with each other. They are in daily contact either as they work on their various programs or as they interact within the American community. In short, personal relationships abroad between personnel of different agencies develop ties and friendships which build a trust and confidence not easily obtained in the Washington setting. When your kids play soccer together and you all swim at the embassy pool, your relationship with your colleagues has out-of-the-work-place dimensions.

Another unifying factor is living in the foreign country where you are implementing your programs and policies. The prevailing view remains that “we who live here” know the country and its people, as well as the unique circumstances under which we and they are operating. Washington is often seen as inserting itself in a manner that undercuts the ability of the Mission to accomplish what it has been asked to achieve. This commonly shared view of Washington leads personnel serving abroad to seek support and assistance from others at post when parent agencies in Washington seem out of focus.

The above two observations provide a framework or the atmosphere for work in our overseas missions. It is the Ambassador that gives the Mission abroad its direction and unifies its elements into an effective team. Strong leadership and good management are key elements that determine his success. Certainly the President's letter defining the Ambassador's authority is crucial but with the changing times and the new authorities given to executive branch departments and agencies, the personal ability of the Ambassador to lead will be increasingly important in maintaining the dynamic role of the diplomatic mission abroad.

The tool that has proven most effective in the Ambassador's leadership and management of his mission has been and remains the "Country Team" concept. The Country Team is composed of all agency and section heads in the mission. It meets on a regular basis and serves as a forum for the ambassador to communicate with all elements of the mission --- providing direction and guidance. It is in this forum that he can insure that ALL elements of the mission know and understand the mission's priorities and how each needs to contribute to see that those priorities are achieved. It is also the place where all others in the mission in leadership positions can inform the Ambassador and others of key developments and concerns in their individual areas. Having all senior Mission personnel "in the know" remains essential to an effective operation.

The country team is a structure and a means but not an end. An ambassador must be interested and involved in every major program in which the mission is involved. This task is quite daunting in a large post but essential nevertheless. Key mission elements need to know that their work is important to their Ambassador, who is after all the most important figure in their life abroad. The Ambassador's personal contact, which underscores his interest, needs to be supplemented with a willingness to engage and to fight for the team when that seems necessary. Countless times senior representatives of other agencies will find themselves in a bind with their chain of command. Often their own chain of command may be trapped in Washington politics and unable to support their people in the field. When the AID Director simply cannot get a decision and there is a real risk of embarrassment to the U.S. in the host country, the Ambassador's intervention will often resolve the problem. Such support and willingness to engage on behalf of post officers results in lasting and undying loyalty.

An effective ambassador in the field must cultivate good relations with senior officials of all departments and agencies in Washington. If an ambassador has developed a relationship with senior Washington officials, he will have the ability to call on that relationship in time of need. When the Washington end has confidence in the Ambassador (often as a result of a single meeting that "went well"), it has

invaluable dividends in resolving issues. Once again the Ambassador's image within the mission is that of an effective and formidable leader who can produce for his troops. The troops in return want to support the Ambassador. The team works.

The Ambassador sets the mood and the atmosphere for effective interagency cooperation in the way in which he manages the Mission. When he is inclusive when organizing mission affairs (and that includes mixing agencies at representational events), then he communicates to all his personnel that this is important and that he expects that they, too, will think across agency and departmental lines when carrying out their responsibilities in the field. The team is stronger.

Post 9/11 ambassadors have seen a surge in challenges to their traditional role and authorities. These challenges stem in large part from legislation that created new agencies and grants new authorities for those agencies to operate abroad. Inevitably there are frictions and tussles between agencies as they seek to define exactly how they will interact. This question is especially pertinent with the new Department of Homeland Security. If the past is a guide, coordination between the new agencies and the Ambassador will be resolved as both parties deal with the pragmatics of working together abroad.

Challenges to the Ambassador's authority are also coming from the Defense Department, a department that has long had authorities abroad. Under present circumstances, however, the Defense Department is asserting a far more active role and seeking to operate new security programs under the authority of the regional commanders. Significantly, forces under regional commanders are not under the authority of the Ambassador. Hence, the Ambassador will not have a clear mandate in the decision to deploy or in defining their mission. He will have to use his personal contacts and skills as a leader and manager to maintain his position as the Chief of Mission in his country. An example of this new military presence abroad is the proposal to permit military personnel to collect information and operate in support of the regional commander without any role for the Ambassador, even though he is responsible for the conduct of US relations in the country of his assignment.

While there is ample reason to be concerned over this effort to develop an independent operating capability outside the oversight and knowledge of the Chief of Mission, there are recent examples that demonstrate that the Ambassador can, in fact, accomplish his mission even absent clear authorities. Following the military action in Iraq in 2003, there were multiple agencies with mandates to support humanitarian activities in Iraq as well as US-led reconstruction efforts. The military was in the lead and, frankly, had the manpower. AID and State had the experience and the connections the military needed

with the NGO community. In Jordan, as Ambassador, I created a task force, including elements under the authority of the regional commander, to coordinate US efforts in Jordan (Iraq's western gateway). I also provided office space and administrative support co-locating the task force in the Embassy itself. Pragmatics prevailed and the un-mandated "interagency" task force operated magnificently.

The ultimate resolution to ambassadorial authority and the preeminent role of the Ambassador in his country of assignment will be made in Washington. Senior administration officials need to recognize and acknowledge that the Ambassador is their person in the Embassy --- not a representative of the State Department. As such, he can and should lead the interagency effort in his country. He can do so with their support; he cannot if that support is absent.

– **GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT** –

ELLEN LAIPSON

When the government is in one of its periodic throes of reform and reorganization, there is always a danger that the pendulum will swing too far in one direction. Consensus forms around a fundamental diagnosis of the problem, and then around a basic solution. Once the solution is identified, it's hard to step back and ask whether it's really the right move; the momentum creates too much gravitational pull in one direction.

The current preoccupation with restructuring the national security bureaucracy because of 9-11 (failure to prevent the attack, and to coordinate responses to terrorism with maximum efficiency and effectiveness) and because of the intelligence failure associated with Iraq and its purported weapons of mass destruction has created such a moment. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the more recent decision to add a new layer of leadership to the complex intelligence system have one core idea in common: the United States government has to do a better job of integrating related functions in our enormous national security system, and of promoting more information sharing across agencies and disciplines.

Both 9-11 and the analysis of Iraq prior to the war in 2003 and the post-war confusion over governance, goals, etc., were caused in part by a failure of the inter-agency system; the different components of government failed to work together, share information, and see themselves as component parts of a single system with shared goals and objectives. The 9-11 Commission and the WMD Commission that followed it largely concurred on this diagnosis of the problem, and subsequently reached similar conclusions about the need for more integration of work force cadres and cross-training of national security professionals, so that they are better aware of their counterparts in other agencies and better equipped to communicate and collaborate with them.

The issue of cross-training and fostering more interagency cooperation is now in vogue. Each of the executive training schools of the military, diplomacy and intelligence now strive to demonstrate that they contribute to this enhanced understanding of the interagency process. The State Department, to give one example, is putting in place a complex matrix of requirements for the next generation of diplomats that

includes professional rotations to other parts of the national security system, as a criterion for promotion to senior ranks.

But it's time to think strategically, and not do as our big bureaucracy often does, where everyone, to use the tired soccer analogy, runs after the ball, leaving no one on defense to be ready for other contingencies. We need to strike the balance right, preparing part of our rising professional workforce for maximum effectiveness in interagency activities, but understanding that most of the workforce will and probably should remain in their individual disciplines. There is a danger to promoting so much cross-fertilization of experience and perspective that people become bureaucratic generalists, not deeply proficient in key processes or issues that are essential to the system. Someone who has, for example, moved outside their home agency or function in the first five years of his or her career may be rewarded for having better knowledge of the customer or the interagency process, but may actually know less about his or her own agency than peers who remained in place and climbed the internal ladder. One of the new insights about the insistence that all military officers have a "joint" or "purple" experience early in their careers is that officers may spend less than 10 years of a military career in their own service, and not be deeply connected to their fellow officers in the same service, because of all the time spent moving among widely different professional experiences.

Not all of the national security disciplines are convinced that cross-training is the key to success, for the government as a whole, as well as for the interests of the particular discipline. Current and former clandestine intelligence leaders argue that their discipline is not well suited to the sharing and transparency implicit in the promotion of cross training. They believe that their service should remain a discrete (and discreet) part of the system, respected for its unique capabilities, but largely left to itself. For ambassadors, this can mean a chronic headache, not knowing enough about what a CIA station in the field is up to, and whether its sometimes risky activities might bring unwanted attention or controversy to the mission as a whole.

Clandestine officers, fighter pilots, language specialists – one can imagine a set of skills that have required deep investment that should not be diluted by requiring those experts to spend time in other agencies, unless the individuals have a motivation to broaden their careers and seek new experiences. One would hope for some self-selection, where talented experts in a proven field are eager to test themselves with new challenges, and these individuals may embody some of the natural leadership attributes one would want to see in senior management in government. But the system also needs to show that it values and rewards those whose inclination is to be the best they can be in their chosen field, and

not be punished by a system that has determined that the only route to advancement is to develop diverse skills and seek interagency experiences.

For some managers, there is a relatively easy way to make the distinction between those who should be groomed for interagency competence and those whose contribution is greatest by strengthening and deepening their core skill. It is the distinction between action officers and analysts, those who are good at process and at implementing decisions, versus those who observe and assess and provide intellectual support to the policy process. The former group comprises those best suited to moving around, as careers in the military and diplomacy often require. The latter group is more likely to be based in headquarters and to have more stable or predictable career paths. It is important, as intelligence managers have learned, to create sufficient incentives and recognition for the officers who spend most of a career working a single but critical issue, such as the Chinese economy or Arab politics. If the personnel system becomes skewed to making everyone rotate around for career advancement, the government loses the true deep expertise it so badly needs.

The tradeoffs for managers in trying to get the balance right also touch on what we value in our leaders – how do we know who will be a better leader, the one with a brave record as a military officer with little experience in bureaucratic process, or the experienced policy wonk who understands the intricacies of the interagency but is a generalist when it comes to substance? Of course there are intangible attributes to leadership that derive from personality, temperament, and life experience that cannot be taught or channeled through personnel policies. The system needs to recognize talent in all its forms, and to create a workforce, at the entry level and at the top, where people respect their colleagues in different agencies and with different skills. They need to understand that, despite the natural tendency toward competition and pettiness in large bureaucracies, there is a higher purpose of shared values and goals. In our post-9-11 effort to improve government performance, we should inculcate those values throughout the workforce, but be selective in grooming the small set of players who will spend their most productive years in the arcane work of interagency coordination and policy implementation.

– APPENDIX A –

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
2004 NATIONAL SECURITY CONFERENCE
FINAL REPORT

PANEL III:
INTEGRATING NATIONAL POWER
FOR THE
*21ST CENTURY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**
15 SEPTEMBER 2004

PANEL CHARTER

The United States is confronted by an international security environment that has become increasingly complex and unpredictable over the last two decades. This will, in all probability, increase in coming decades due to globalization, the erosion of state sovereignty, the growth of transnational actors, and other international forces. Ambitious states and transnational actors will use these trends to advance their aggressive and even violent agendas. Further, the complexity of the 21st century international security environment will be manifested in the threat of asymmetric attacks, international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional security, peace enforcement operations as well as other security issues.

* In September of 2004, the Henry L. Stimson Center organized in a panel discussion sponsored by the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Security Series annual conference. This is a summary of key findings.

The 21st century international security environment requires the seamless integration of U.S. military, diplomatic and intelligence instruments. Interagency coordination and cooperation must occur when formulating policy in Washington and implementing policy in “the field.” These interagency processes are essential for the effective and efficient application of national power to achieve political objectives. However, national security policy processes have been found sorely lacking in such integration on many occasions. Most recently, this was a principal finding of the post-Sept. 11 commissions.

This panel will discuss the challenges that the 21st century international security environment presents to the U.S. government’s interagency processes. The panel discussion will focus on three dimensions of interagency coordination: the interagency policy process in Washington, interagency collaboration in the field, and cultivation of interagency expertise among national security professionals.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- When you were a rising professional, what training did you receive and how much awareness was there of being “part of a larger team”?
- What are your perceptions of being in the field and running a team?
- From a Department of Defense perspective, what will affect the exit strategy in Iraq?
- How do you communicate through a large, bureaucratic system?
- How well-suited is each department to the tasks assigned it?
- What is the current relationship of the United States with Europe, particularly with Great Britain?
- In this age of globalization, how great is the need for regional knowledge?

SUMMARY

Ambassador Chas. W. Freeman Jr.

- Chas. Freeman joined the Foreign Service in 1965 when he received a post in India. At that point, he was fortunate enough to have a base chief who wanted to share information between the intelligence and military communities. In his opinion, the greatest difference between the diplomatic culture and the military was the sense of mentoring and experience in the diplomatic corps.

- While serving as ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm, Freeman felt his main responsibility was to be America's eyes and ears abroad. When it came to deployment of American troops through Saudi Arabia, Freeman interacted well with General Norman Schwarzkopf, although both employed different leadership styles. In his estimation, the greatest problem in Desert Storm was a disconnect between the military and civilian spheres, which ultimately allowed Saddam Hussein to stay in power. In particular, the power structure lacked a civilian counterpart to Schwarzkopf, which further intensified the unanswered questions of the war: What were the United States' war aims? How does one end the war?
- Freeman insisted there are things that an interagency system "can and can't do." In an orderly system, such a mechanism can allow all perspectives and expertise to be utilized. The interagency process is a potentially valuable mechanism for planning and enforcing discipline across bureaucratic lines, but not for decision making.
- The notion that security and military are synonymous is incorrect, as the military specializes in the use of force, not necessarily prevention. For that reason, new structures need to be considered, such as an interagency national security service to parallel its civilian counterpart. In addition, more Foreign Service Officers should be kept in reserve, to help in the complicated, yet crucial task of diplomacy.
- A further problem with the Foreign Service today is the manner in which diplomats are appointed. According to Freeman, the process in which individuals who make large monetary campaign donations are appointed to ambassadorships is archaic.
- A focus on cross-training between intelligence gatherers and military personnel would help the military to understand and appreciate when no intelligence is available.
- □ While the representation overseas of various U.S. government agencies and departments is important, the United States must be careful about "casting the net too wide."
- In Freeman's opinion, there is a need to re-examine the United State's role in the U.N. Security Council. The National Security Act of 1947 is not necessarily applicable to the United States in the 21st century. However, he was also distressed by the "arrogance of foreign policy" and the "alienation of allies." Overall, he urged a return to a "listening mode."
- While academics try to divide the world into broad terms, such as "proliferators and nonproliferators," individuals still act primarily in terms of national or cultural allegiances. Therefore, foreign policy should focus on specific intelligence and regional knowledge. The challenge facing the United States "has never been greater," and is a "different game" that requires greater regional language skills and drawing upon the one-fifth of the world's population that is Muslim.

Ambassador James R. Lilley

- As a case officer in the clandestine service in Southeast Asia, Lilley experienced first-hand the problems of miscommunication, when two operations used the same location as a safe house and were ultimately discovered. The result was the arrest of both U.S. and Chinese citizens, and ultimately the closure of the post.
- Lilley also discussed the diplomacy necessary in the redeployment of American troops prior to the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. In an effort to remove a sizeable American presence from the middle of the city, Lilley had to work closely with military officials to move the troops from the center of the city, without depriving them of amenities from the city center.
- Cases in which coordination has broken down should be recorded, thoroughly examined and utilized in order to avoid repeating mistakes.
- In his experience, countries “rise through history” depending on how they act during covert operations, as shown in Laos, China and Vietnam. The challenge facing the United States is the rebuilding of Afghanistan and the normalization process. Countries that ultimately seek self-control will not react well, therefore the United States should be aware of evolutionary issues that change with the times.
- Interaction with the academic community is crucial for the clandestine service. As shown in the former Soviet Union, only through infiltration can true success be achieved. Deception and manipulation are still the most important tools to be utilized to “protect the deal from contamination.”
- Regional knowledge is still important, but the era of the big, 500-person station is over. At any one time, only about 20 percent of officers in an embassy carry their weight. A change in training must come from a bottom-up approach, not a top-down philosophy.
- In Lilley’s opinion, nonproliferation is a high priority for the United States today. Information on the nuclear capabilities of other countries can only be achieved through infiltration of those at the highest levels, as in the case of a North Korean specialist ultimately brought to the United States.

General Peter Pace, U.S. Marine Corps

- Peter Pace’s first realization of the need for integration came as a brigadier general in Somalia, when he had the responsibility of creating a coalition force without knowing what countries were participating, nor what troops and equipment they had. During his second tour in Somalia, the U.S. government assigned individuals to work for 30 or 60 days, causing a turnover problem. In

Japan, Pace learned that the value of synergy is realized when one is lucky enough to have a leader with a true “ability to lead.”

- In the field, the crucial ingredients for overcoming “stove pipe” tendencies are individual initiative and informal contact and communication. In Washington, the National Security Council serves well in preparing recommendations for the president. But policy tends to be stove-piped in implementation. There are a number of potentially useful ways to tackle this problem:
 - revise the incentive structure to foster and reward interagency communication;
 - move from an ad hoc to a systematic approach whereby cross-training is integrated into career development;
 - ramp up cross-disciplinary education, perhaps by establishing an interagency academy;
 - make more frequent and extensive use of military facilities for “working group” interactions;
 - allow the State Department to take the lead in places like Afghanistan; and
 - allow “multiple tours” for those currently rising through the ranks, rather than an entire career in the Department of Defense. This would enrich understanding of the duties of other branches of the service.
- While adopting some of these suggestions might require new legislation, many could be instituted merely by decision of the president. In any event, it is worth exploring these and other means of strengthening interagency processes at home and in the field. Meeting the security challenges of the 21st century requires that we capture the synergy from all aspects of national power.

ANALYSIS

- Panel III provided unique insights regarding systemic tensions in the interagency process. The panel discussion illuminated the oft-incongruous perspectives and activities among the U.S. Foreign Service, intelligence service and the military during conflicts or crises. Clearly, a degree of parochialism exists in each area as a result of differing educational systems, assignment histories and experiences. That the interagency process does not break down is a tribute to the professionalism and interpersonal skills of the various actors, who are brought together during a crisis. The question that the panel addressed, if somewhat obliquely, is whether these tensions can be mitigated.
- The current system of appointing ambassadors based on political versus professional pedigree may undercut the officers of the Foreign Service, but a political appointee is not necessarily a recipe for incompetence. An ambassador relies substantially on the regional expertise of the embassy personnel, who come from these three communities. As ambassadors bring along

different political qualities that fall outside the Foreign Service, a professional functionary may not bring the credentials needed to properly represent the United States. This subject is worthy of debate, but it is not clear-cut.

- The panel emphasized throughout that the hallmark of the interagency process is the informal, personal interactions of the service personnel. Whether interacting on a daily basis or during a crisis, the ability of agency subordinates to form into informal working groups for the exchange of information and preliminary analysis certainly strengthens the interagency process. Naturally, the service educational systems should provide as many culturally and linguistically skilled personnel as possible, but the panelists placed such emphasis on interpersonal skills that these should become part of the curriculum as well a criterion for career progression.
- Understanding that the interagency process is deliberative rather than executive is noteworthy. Decision makers rely on subordinates to present information in such a manner that it can be acted upon. Subordinates must sift through the plethora of intelligence, historical, background and other pertinent factors — cultural, political, economic and social — vet their conclusions with the other agencies, and then package the information for a decision. The panel’s recommendation for formal interagency training is appropriate, but the school must focus on the decision-making process. In this manner, the executive can hear all agency viewpoints and caveats before making an informed decision. Finally, the curriculum must emphasize that the executive’s decision is final, and to undermine that decision is the worst of all sins. Too often, national efforts are undermined by parochialism and partisanship.
- Two final points that the panel discussed rather freely were not properly resolved. First, the idea that the United States has damaged diplomatic relations with Europe ignores the historic record. NATO scholars would view the recent disagreements as par for U.S.-European relations. Specifically, concerns that the alliance was crumbling as a result of a crisis have been the one constant since 1949. This can be seen over the years with issues and events such as the rearming of Germany, the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, Flexible Response, France’s withdrawal from the integrated military structure, Vietnam, the neutron bomb, and introducing theater nuclear missiles into Germany, to name the most salient. In terms of tensions, Iraq is a rather tame affair. Understanding that liberal democracies disagree, often bitterly, is normal. Characterizing the latest dispute as a debacle is undiplomatic. Second, making an issue of no end state in Iraq and Afghanistan or any conflict may reflect partisan politics, but is at least ill-considered. The historical record offers few instances of definitive end states of conflicts, particularly with insurgencies. Perhaps a more constructive approach would have been to demonstrate how the

interagency process could mitigate the problems associated with end state rather than lobbing rhetorical grenades.

- In short, formalizing the interagency process is a worthy goal and promises to be the best approach to promoting a harmonized response to future crises and conflicts. In this regard, the panel offered noteworthy and constructive insights.

– **APPENDIX B** –

**ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS
ON THE SUBJECT OF
INTERAGENCY PROCESS REFORM**

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