USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE INTERAGENCY

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ABSTRACT

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      In 1986, by mandating jointness, the Goldwater-Nichols Act brought about dramatic changes in how the Department of Defense (DOD) operates. Today, some call for similar changes throughout the interagency in order improve efficiency.

      Three options are offered by reform advocates regarding interagency efficiency: use the current system (status quo), change to a lead-agency model, or change to an NSC-centric model. Some groups, especially the NSC-centric proponents, advocate significant changes to the current system. Where appropriate, such changes are discussed for each option. For each option, viability is measured using five factors: suitability (will it work?); feasibility (does the US have, or is it willing to commit, the resources to do it?); acceptability (legally and morally – who is affected?); unity of effort; and risk. Because unity of effort is such a key factor, it is weighed with a 2X multiplier. After concluding analysis of the three options, a scoring matrix is provided.

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE INTERAGENCY

The United States (US) Constitution is the primary and original source of law in the United States. It establishes three branches of government in the US: legislative, executive and judicial. In particular, the legislative branch has enacted Federal statutes (laws) such as Title 10, Title 32 (for the National Guard) and Title 50, U.S. Code, which dictate constraints and restraints under which the Department of Defense may operate. Similar statutes exist for the other Federal agencies. The judicial branch exercises authority to review laws and orders to determine if they are Constitutional. As Chief Executive under the executive branch, the President of the United States may exercise his power through the use of Executive Orders. All national policymaking stems from executive, legislative, and judicial authority inherent in the US Constitution. For example, the US Constitution places limits on Presidential power which include a requirement that the Senate advise and consent on Presidential appointments to high Federal office. Advice and consent is mandated in confirming the President's nominees for posts in his cabinet. It is the Presidential cabinet that forms a key part of the interagency discussed in this paper.

It is well known that from the beginning of the history of the United States of America (US) American Presidents solicited and received policy advice from their cabinet officials. However, an interagency system of coordinating senior-level consultation with the President for grand national strategic policy making dates back to World War I. The Department of Defense (DOD) defines interagency coordination as: "Within the context of Department of Defense involvement, the coordination that occurs between elements of Department of Defense and engaged US Government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and regional and international organizations for the purpose of accomplishing an objective."[1] Notwithstanding the broad scope of the DOD definition, this paper will look mainly at US federal agencies – the US national interagency.[2]

A common fact concerning all activity in grand strategic policy making is that the US risks unpredictable multi-ordered strategic effects at home and abroad with every policy decision made or not made. Not surprisingly, many policy options have been proposed in the last few years to enhance efficiency in national strategic policymaking. This paper will focus on three main options offered by reform advocates regarding interagency efficiency: use the current system (status quo); change to a lead-agency model, or change to an NSC-centric model. Some groups, especially the NSC-centric proponents, advocate significant changes to the current system. Where appropriate, such changes will be discussed for each option. Before

analyzing these options it will be necessary to discuss factors which make this a relevant and timely debate for our national policy makers and for other interested parties.

<u>How We Got To This Point – Relevant Initiatives</u>

The current system for interagency policymaking "…involving the routinized consultations of senior department and agency officials"[3] dates back to the years immediately following World War II. Congress created the National Security Council (NSC) when it passed the National Security Act of 1947.[4] Since that time, US national strategic policy has been made. through the function of the NSC and its interagency makeup.

A recent initiative by the State Department involves the establishment of an Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). This office has the goal of developing a new planning framework for reconstruction and stability operations.[5] The S/CRS is to "lead, coordinate and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations."[6] Largely seen by many today as a possible model for other non-DOD agencies to emulate, the

> S/CRS develops strategies for reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) activities, leads interagency planning to prevent or mitigate conflict, and coordinates R&S operations with bilateral partners, international and regional organizations, and nongovernmental and private sector entities.[7]

The S/CRS is not the only current initiative underway that is intended to improve the way the US conducts interagency operations. Another initiative, at all three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical; was announced in December, 2004 when the Principals Committee (PC) of the NSC endorsed a Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) proposal regarding reconstruction and stabilization (R&S). This proposal called for a

> framework for comprehensive US Government (USG) efforts in planning and implementing R&S operations that included integrated interagency response teams at three levels: a Washington decision-making body and staff – Country Reconstruction & Stabilization Group (CRSG); a civilian planning cell located at the appropriate combatant command – Humanitarian Reconstruction and Stabilization Team (HRST); and, field management and coordination teams – Advanced Civilian Teams (ACT's).[8]

The creation of a CRSG relates to the work of the S/CRS in that a CRSG can give "oversight to an S/CRS-led interagency process to provide strategic planning and coordination…"[9]

The Combatant Commander's (COCOM) Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) is expected to work with the S/CRS.[10] The US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) J-7 staff believes that

where the S/CRS deploys a HRST to the COCOM HQ, the JIACG will continue to perform its broader functions in support of the COCOM but the HRST may assume certain JIACG planning functions with respect to the particular contingency….the HRST will be focused on the particular state or crisis while the JIACG must retain oversight of the entire COCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). [11]

Furthermore, the HRST has an ongoing reach back relationship with the CRSG in Washington. The HRST has coordination authority with the COCOM's JIACG Crisis Coordination Cell. Similarly, the ACT HQ has a reach back relationship with the HRST, and the ACTs themselves coordinate with the Coalition Joint Forces Land Component Commander (CJFLCC) of the Coalition Joint Task Force (CJTF). [12] Of course, this implies that the COCOM would create a CJTF having a CJFLCC to deal with the situation.

Today, in addition to participating in the NSC process, the senior leadership of the nation is addressing improvements to interagency efficiency. There are several recent developments involving our senior leaders.

In December, 2005 President Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44. NSPD 44 orders the Secretary of State (SecState) to coordinate and lead reconstruction and security (R&S) activities. It directs the S/CRS to assist SecState to develop R&S strategies, coordinate interagency processes to identify states at risk of instability, provide USG decision makers with detailed options for an integrated US response in connection with specific R&S operations, and coordinate USG responses with SecDef and other national and international interagency players. NSPD 44 also established a PCC for R&S Operations to be chaired by the Coordinator for R&S and a designated member of the NSC staff. [13]

DOD Deputy Secretary England directed Mr. Craig Fields to lead "a Defense Science Board (DSB) study team last summer to examine organizational changes needed for DOD to manage the implementation of DOD policies and improve the Department's ability to conduct and support stability operations." [14] The report on "Institutionalizing Stability Operations Within DOD" was published in September, 2005 following Mr. Fields' DSB study. This report called for no revision to an earlier DSB report on "Transition to and from Hostilities" (which resulted in DOD Directive 3000.5 "Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations"), but instead called for an acceleration of DOD's own capabilities. The report cited as rationale the belief of the drafters that "during the last year the progress of other organs of Government has been less than fulsome…" [15] The DSB urged DOD to "concurrently give full support to the evolution of capabilities elsewhere within the government." [16] Notwithstanding the DSB's protestations over lack of speed in improving interagency

coordination for stability operations, things are moving in a new direction and change is afoot at the U.S. Department of State (DOS) as well.

SecState Condoleezza Rice has been in office just over a year and she is already making her presence and beliefs known both to the staff inside DOS and to the world. On December 11, 2005 the Washington Post published an op-ed piece written by Ms. Rice entitled "The Promise of Democratic Peace."[17] This op-ed piece was not just an opportunity to be heard on a pressing issue. Indeed, Dr. Rice has taken her words into action and clearly demonstrated her resolve in delivering a speech to the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service on 18 January, 2006.[18]

Secretary Rice believes that promoting democracy around the world will help us win the Global War on Terror (GWOT) – or long war. She calls for partnership and not paternalism. While she acknowledges former SecState Powell's efforts in leading diplomats into the 21st century, some might say that SecState Rice is using her especially good working relationship with the President to implement many initiatives that SecState Powell was unable to get started. SecState Rice has called for better use of DOS personnel. She wants to send DOS diplomats to regions and countries in keeping with the current reality of where the US needs to focus its diplomatic efforts. She also wants to make service in hardship posts a prerequisite for advancement to the highest levels in the DOS.[19] Most recently, she issued a press release announcing a "New Direction for U.S. Foreign Assistance."[20] Ms. Rice ordered improved alignment of the foreign assistance activities of DOS and USAID.[21] Having discussed initiatives recently adopted by US federal agencies that reflect an attempt to improve interagency processes, there remains treatment of a key concept that underpins the core of interagency activity and current reform advocacy. That concept is unity of effort.

Unity of Effort

Unity of effort is a key construct in the US national security process.[22] If unity of effort is desired, all the participating agencies must share a common understanding of each agency's values and capabilities. As for goals and objectives,

> Clearly defined and articulated national security policy objectives contribute towards achieving organizational unity of effort….Additionally, Joint Publication 0-2 posits that, in debating the potential employment of all instruments of national power, interagency national security policy planners and decision makers must consider the overarching political aim and contributory political and military objectives and recognize which agencies are best postured to contribute to the attainment of those objectives.[23]

Recognition of the importance of unity of effort is not limited to scholars at academic institutions. For example, in 2002, the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report that contained a finding that a clearly defined strategy was necessary, to include establishment of priorities.[24] The GAO went on to recommend the establishment of a national strategy for homeland security. They saw such a strategy as integral to supporting a more unified effort. Concerning preparation against terrorist attacks, the GAO presented testimony before Congress calling for a national strategy to improve readiness. They also called for improved partnering among those in Federal, State, and local governments.[25]

Education and training play a large role in achieving unity of effort. The Clinton administration's Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 "formally mandated interagency training programs in complex contingency planning and operations to develop a cadre of officials familiar with the integrated planning process delineated in the PDD and to improve overall interagency performance in the future."[26]

It is important to distinguish between two categories of gains expected from enhancing unity of effort. If one desires to achieve short-term gains, then one may need only to find a few top-level factors in a system that must be changed. Some might call this the search for low-hanging fruit. Such top-level changes may yield enhancements in unity of effort, but such enhancements may be only temporary in nature. For example, a new boss coming in and quickly eliminating middle layers of management or just clarifying the authority of those in charge may achieve unity of effort gains only in this category. If one desires long-term enhancements to unity of effort, then a comprehensive analysis of a particular endeavor or organization must be made. Adopting recommendations for change from such a comprehensive review will likely provide enduring enhancements to unity of effort. These points will be followed up in turn and made even more relevant as options are analyzed in this paper.

Having looked at current initiatives and unity of effort as a key concept underpinning interagency activity, it is now time to examine just who the advocates for change are today.

The Current Situation: Advocates for Change

A serious implication of the current organization and function of the NSC is that there are many players and many steps required in order to reach a policymaking consensus to take before the President for a decision. Making matters more complex, Len Hawley and others assert that "non-military elements of power for government action are not well understood and that their effects on adversaries is essentially unknown."[27] Not surprisingly, there are many who write that the current NSC system is flawed and not working as well as it should be. Examples

cited include the following unity of effort-related recurring weaknesses and critical problems: "flawed communication between intelligence and policy, weak policy analysis, inconsistent application of best practices in planning, inadequate organizational capacity, dated educational curriculum and weak faculty expertise, and absence of a supporting funding strategy."[28] Clearly, the examples above are noted as deficient ways and means available to achieve the desired end of effective national strategic policymaking.

Colonel Brad M. Ward's 2003 US Army War College (USAWC) Strategic Research Project (SRP) argues that concerning U.S. Government agencies and except for the DOD, "none attempt to formally initiate their personnel into the interagency process through advanced schooling and assignments."[29] Lawrence B. Wilkerson goes even further to assert that "many important decisions from 2001 to 2005 were not made within the traditional NSC process."[30] For example,

> …some of the most important decisions about U.S. national security – including vital decisions about postwar Iraq – were made by a secretive little-known cabal…a very small group of people led by Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld….More often than not …(Dr.) Rice was simply steamrolled by this cabal.[31]

In his Ph. D dissertation, Paul Severance advocates positive change and asserts primarily that unity of effort is paramount. He writes that "national security policy and strategy, to be both relevant and effective, must be focused, coordinated, approved, and implemented within the bureaucratic structure of the Federal government."[32]

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a major group that advocates change within the national security apparatus. CSIS was a critical player in the process that led to passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986. Recall that Goldwater-Nichols mandated and is credited with the largely successful concept of jointness within the DOD. In 2002 CSIS turned their attention yet again to defense reform issues. A relevant CSIS Study is entitled *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a new Strategic Era.* CSIS has published two study reports under this title to date: a *Phase 1 Report* dated March, 2004, and a *Phase 2 Report* dated July 2005 (BG-N1 or BG-N2, respectively) . Asserting that DoD reform was no longer sufficient, CSIS wrote in BG-N2 that "the multidimensional nature of 21st-century missions such as combating terrorism and homeland security, makes it necessary to examine the Defense Department in the context of the broader United States Government (USG) team."[33]

Having set the stage, it is now time to examine the three main options offered by reform advocates regarding interagency efficiency. For each option, viability will be measured using five factors: suitability (will it work?); feasibility (does the US have, or is it willing to commit, the

resources to do it?); acceptability (legally and morally – who is affected?); unity of effort; and risk. Because unity of effort is such a key factor, it will be weighed with a 2X multiplier.

Option 1: Use the Current System (status quo)

This option boils down to continuing the use of current organizations and methods of policy analysis done at the PCC level and forwarded up through the Deputies Committee (DC) and PC to get a Presidential decision.

Rationale offered in support of this option includes: 1) that the current system embodies healthy friction. It is good that it is difficult to achieve consensus decisions when the issues are complex and carry such a high risk of damage to US national interests if handled incorrectly. Such difficulties ensure that when a decision does come out of the current process, the very fractiousness involved in reaching that decision ensures that the decision that bubbles up is one that all involved actors will be inclined to support in giving further guidance and directions to their parent agencies in executing the consensus decision. Status quo advocates also point to a need for forceful personalities, not system change, as a key factor in achieving consensus. For example, one argument advanced is that it

> …would be a fatal error to seek interagency coordination by centralizing or homogenizing the interagency process by … (seeking too much unity and integration)…. To succeed, the US government needs…vigorous advocates…. The best way to increase interagency coordination will be the one that promotes coordination while respecting these differences and enhancing their forceful expression.[34]

2) That there is no problem with the interagency process other than that policy staffers at the PCC lack empowerment to negotiate in drafting policy. Rather, they are sent to PCC meetings with a strict agenda and, due to poor management policies, are allowed little room to build consensus with others who do not largely agree with their coming-in position.[35]

Rationale against the status quo include: 1) that failures cited previously as well as specific policy failures (to include Iraq) are attributable to a lack of faith in the interagency process resulting in a decision to bypass and use the "cabal" initially and to ultimately designate a lead agency approach in tasking the DOD with the lead for efforts in Iraq; 2) that mere belief in the process will not fix serious problems therein. Those against the status quo argue that what is needed is an overhauling of the current system to include empowering PCC participants, providing executive authority over the group involved, and funding to support interagency staff and projects in all the agencies, and not just in the DOD.

Under the status quo, once policy is decided, there often remains ambiguity at best concerning which agency will be charged with implementing the policy just decided upon.

Recall that the NSC exists to serve the Advisor to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA). As a matter of culture in the exercise of national power, the President rarely personally dictates his authorization for an actor to take action. Instead, the APNSA takes matters to the President and then reports decisions back to the NSC. Because the NSC members do not routinely witness first-hand the interaction between the APNSA and the President, the members may be unclear as to how much authority has been actually conferred upon those who take a policy decision for action. At other times, the President may meet with only one or two cabinet members and make a policy decision that then gets reported back to the NSC. In either case, efficiency would be enhanced if clear authority were to be stated directly by the President or at least by the APNSA in the name of President.

Once everyone is clear on who is to do what and with what authority, there remains a question of funding. Authority to act is nearly worthless unless that authority is backed by adequate funds placed at the disposal of the actor. In the US federal interagency it is a recognized truth that DOD is the cash cow. The other agencies are cash-strapped and often even personnel-strapped compared to DOD. The reasons for this are many, but chief among them is that Congress accepts funding DOD with its large budget in part because DOD is able to provide clearly measured effectiveness in the use of the money given it by Congress. In other words, it is relatively easy to provide measures of effectiveness (MOE) for the work of DOD compared to attempting the same for DOS, Treasury, etc. The success of the work of the other agencies is hard to measure in the terms that DOD can use. For example, just how does one measure success in implementing a long-range DOS global strategic partner strategy? How is success in prevention of war or attacks on our shores measured? Is the absence of war or attacks a good enough yardstick upon which a member of Congress will vote for increased funding for a particular agency like DOS or Treasury? Of course, the answer is that things are much more complex than that – Congress will be more willing to appropriate money if measurable results can be seen. Asking Congress to appropriate money for programs which will not yield tangible results in short order is a tough sell on Capitol Hill. As a result, DOD receives a huge share of Congressional appropriations. Therefore, if a policy decision is made, oftentimes DOD is asked to underwrite the venture with its funds – even if DOD is not given the authority to run the show. Seeing that the United States is committed to fighting a long war requiring it to bring all its elements of power to bear, the bottom line remains allocation of funds to the agencies charged with exercising the various elements of power. Such funds are a significant part of the resources available – the other parts are personnel and materiel.

Under the current system, lack of unity of effort is a key rallying cry for those who advocate change from the status quo. It is easy to see why. The bubble up approach to policy making described above is the antithesis of unified effort in achieving consensus and taking action. Relying on force of personality and hidden agendas on the part of the players all for the cause of advancing the interests of their own agency over the common good of efficient use of time and resources in deciding and executing policy may result in a decision that all the players are on board with. However, there is much wasted time and energy under the current bubble up system. Therefore, for status quo, unity of effort receives a low score.

Legal issues are a factor to consider in all three options. Indeed, risk is often considered in terms of risk of exposure to suit, injunction or other legal action. Under the status quo, if Congress grows impatient, the biggest potential legal issue may well be resultant challenges to new legislation or a Presidential executive order that mandates change to the interagency process. The result of such a situation would be lengthy delays in implementing intended changes. Clearly, those in favor of maintaining the status quo must consider the specter of such legal issues as an incentive to make the current system work better than its critics say it does.

Will it work if the US continues with the current system? The BG-N2 report asserts that we are headed for serious problems in the future due to an "increasingly complex security environment… (where)…centrally coordinated planning is critical to ensuring unity of effort among the diverse array of agencies involved in the execution of a given policy or operation."[36] In addition, the current system resulted in a well-publicized debate over whether or not there was a proper Phase 4 plan for host-hostility operations in Iraq. One debater opined that

> The mistake here was primarily of the Bush administration's making….It is also because no member of the armed forces of the United States went public with his objections or resigned in protest even though the (Phase 4 host-hostility) plan was the military equivalent of medical malpractice.[37]

As long as Iraq war critics have the ear of those in Congress and of the American people, suitability will be low if the US continues with the status quo and changes nothing.

Does the US have or is it willing to commit the resources to maintain the status quo? This is not as easy to answer as it may seem. At first glance, maintaining the status quo appears to be feasible, requiring nothing more than the US has currently committed to the interagency effort. However, one must ask if there a resource cost not just in maintaining the status quo, but also in policy implementation under the status quo. Under this test, the bubble up nature of status quo policy making will continue to exact a real financial cost in implementing policy that is often unclearly outlined to those who implement it. This lack of clarity requires people to expend

resources just to better define and clarify the nature of what they are authorized to do. Therefore feasibility is scored as moderate.

Is it acceptable to continue with the status quo? Those affected by this, and all, policy options under consideration include the players themselves: President, APNSA/NSC, Congress, and the Federal courts. Also affected are not only the citizens of the United States, but also the governments and citizens of the entire world's countries, as well as non-state actors. If the United States is believed to be seen internationally as continuing to botch large-scale interagency efforts due to an inefficient system of interagency policymaking, then acceptability would appear to be low for maintaining the status quo after factoring in the possibility of unanticipated negative second and third-order effects produced internationally.

What is the risk inherent in maintaining the status quo? Clearly, if policy makers continue with the status quo and also continue to have outcomes such as what the world is being shown by the media in Iraq, then the risk of serious negative consequences to the nation appears high as "…interagency operations are no longer rare. Yet crises are still managed largely on a case by case basis, with interagency coordination mechanisms reinvented each time."[38] In addition, the possibility of Congressional intervention in the form of a new national security act and the legal aftermath of such intervention indicate a high level of risk associated with maintaining the status quo. One can continue to argue that status quo with certain changes would score better. However, such a system would no longer be status quo – it would more resemble one of the next two options up for discussion. Let's turn to lead agency, the second option, and one debated heavily as it has recently been used by the current administration.

Option 2: Change to a Lead Agency Model

In lead agency, one agency is designated to lead the others in planning and implementing strategy to be executed in the interagency. A currently advocated example of a proposal to use the lead agency model is that offered by the Defense Science Board (DSB) of the DOD. The DSB "proposes establishing cross-government contingency planning and integration task forces …under the leadership of the President or NSC… (who would)…also determine the leadership of the task forces."[39] In proposing lead agency, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Peter Pace, USMC, asked in 2004 if the US might "…at the national level, ask our cabinet-level officials to give up some of their day-to-day prerogatives and authority in a way that they will pick up in spades at the National Security Council level."[40] Gen Pace advocates that the President designate a department or agency to be in charge. He further calls for the President

to give that group the authority to give commands to others in the Government to get a job done.

Rationale in support of lead agency centers on an enhanced level of unity of effort in delegating executive and planning authority to one agency. The factor of unity of effort – one leader, clear authority, and clear budget - is considered paramount by those who advocate lead agency. Lead agency seeks to do away with the bubble up, status quo approach to policy making. Specifically, the development and recommendation phases are led by the lead agency. Under lead agency, a goal is to reduce or eliminate altogether the ambiguity discussed above and associated with the status quo regarding who gets charged with policy implementation. Likewise, clear authority and funding are provided to a given lead agency. The designated lead agency is then able to supervise the activity of the others without unnecessary duplication of efforts that the agencies would otherwise face if no one was clearly in charge and directing things. Upon reflection, this sounds very much like the military way of doing things. Accordingly, there is no surprise in learning that many in the DOD advocate this option. It suits the culture of DOD. However, recall the previous comments regarding short term gains in unity of effort. As currently advocated, lead agency appears to be analogous to the low-hanging fruit analogy found above in that short-term gains will be achieved. Unfortunately, neither the analysis nor the recommendations made by lead agency advocates are thorough enough to achieve long-term gains in unity of effort. Therefore unity of effort is scored as moderate in lead agency.

Rationale against lead agency centers on an assertion of "inadequate professional competence"[41] relating to skills in policy planning and interagency coordination among the military and civilian officials involved. Additionally, "agencies generally resist taking direction from one another, particularly with regard to allocating resources."[42] Those against lead agency take the opposite side in the culture argument above in arguing that none of the other agencies shares the culture of the DOD. Detractors of lead agency argue that it would require large cultural changes throughout the interagency.

There are potential legal issues associated with lead agency. In designating a lead agency, the President must operate within the previously-discussed constitutional limits placed on his powers. In addition, some federal workers may be aggrieved over changes that affect their work conditions or even their continued agency employment. For example, consider the current debate and difficulties seen as DOD battles in the courts to implement its National Security Personnel System (NSPS). This is relevant because if the agencies are ordered to enhance their performance as a part of the lead agency option, then some agencies may wish

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to change employee merit and recognition programs in order to achieve demanded increases in productivity and efficiency from their workers.

If the current administration's uses of lead agency continue to be problematic and Congress feels forced to act in improving the efficiency of the interagency, it will be frustrated by lack of change by the parties and it will approach the interagency issue much as did the Congress in 1986 for the DOD issue. If a National Security Act of 2006 or later ever comes into being, it will be because Congress grows impatient with waiting out the current debate and slow implementation of proposals for improving interagency efficiency. Congress will feel that it has no choice but to step in and pass legislation to improve interagency efficiency.   If change is made not by a new law but instead by executive order of an impatient President, such change would not be as lasting as that legislated by Congress. The next President could decide to rescind today's executive order and go in a different direction. In deliberating today over whether or not to act one can be certain that Congress is well aware that the legislative process is very deliberate.

Will it work if the US more formally adopts lead agency? The most recent and poignant example of what can happen when the US designates a lead agency is the outcome in Iraq due to alleged flaws in post-hostility and reconstruction planning. O'Hanlon and BG-N2 also take exception to the lead agency option. BG-N2 writes in discussing Iraq that "…taking a lead agency approach can result in actions that fall well short of what is needed and what the USG is capable of achieving."[43] This does not bode well for the suitability of lead agency. If one agrees with those who believe that lead agency can work, BG-N2 goes on to assert that lead agency "is not sufficient" but that it "may work at the tactical level, where the capabilities of a single agency are most appropriate to the task at hand…"[44] The chief impediments of training and competency could well be improved across the agencies. If such improvements were made, then perhaps lead agency would be more suitable. In fact, some recommendations made by advocates of the third option yet to be discussed would be relevant and helpful even if adopted only to implement a lead agency model. However, such adoption is not the case at present. Due to the current disparate state of training and competency across the over 40 Federal agencies, the suitability score for lead agency is low.

Is there a resource cost not just in adopting lead agency, but also in policy implementation per the lead agency option? Does the US have or is it willing to commit the resources to use a lead agency approach in strategic policymaking? Again, as in the status quo discussion, no new resources are required in simply designating one agency to take the lead on a given interagency issue. Of particular note is that designating a lead agency makes no commitment

to also provide new funding initiatives to the (except DOD) always cash-strapped and fixed-budget Federal agencies. However, a better question is to ask if the US wants lead agency to work. If so, will the US redistribute its DOD money to other agencies in support of lead agency efforts? The answer is yes, if done in accordance with a plan that comes up through the current NSC system or is forced down the NSC's throats by legislation or Presidential order. All told, feasibility is high for lead agency.

Acceptability may be an issue if legal issues described above concerning Federal worker status, or if someone with standing challenges a lead agency designation as unconstitutional or outside the scope of the regulations establishing and governing the operating of that agency. Under the current set of issues in debate, acceptability of lead agency is unsettled. Therefore, it can be seen today as no better than moderately acceptable.

Risk associated with lead agency may be opposite to the risk associated with status quo. For example, a risk exists that if lead agency is adopted, US policy makers will no longer have the reasoned thought, dialogue and oversight – the healthy friction – inherent in the status quo model. Therefore policy makers may not end up with a well thought out policy even if they do end up with policy that reflects unified effort in its creation and implementation. Therefore risk to US interests is scored high. We now turn to the third and final option to be discussed: the NSC-centric model.

Option 3: Change to a NSC-Centric Model

The NSC-centric option has also been called the "CSIS Model."[45] Indeed, BG-N2 advocates this option and describes it thusly: "the President or National Security Advisor designates a representative (who reports back to the President through the APNSA) to lead interagency coordination." [46] One must distinguish the designation of a representative to lead under this option with the designation of an agency to lead in the previously discussed lead agency option. Building on the recommendations from BG-N1, the BG-N2 report integrates many seemingly small steps into a largely overhauled interagency. Of course, one could review the BG-N2 recommendations with an eye towards selectively applying them to either of the first two options instead of considering them only for the NSC-centric option, as CSIS intended. It is important to note that policy development is expected to be more efficient with enhanced unity of effort because of the changes in the culture of planning over what is currently seen in the various agencies.

Specifically, chief among the changes advocated by CSIS is the creation of "an NSC Senior Director and office for Complex Contingency Planning to lead the development of

integrated interagency plans for complex interagency operations, including S&R operations. Planning offices are established in each of the key civilian agencies (in State this would be S/CRS) to participate in the interagency planning process."[47] BG-N2 also advocates creation of a national security career path wherein personnel would rotate in and out of interagency duty assignments (IDA's) which would be career-enhancing in offering accelerated promotion to top performers. BG-N2 goes further to advocate that we build on S/CRS, conduct a quadrennial national security review (QNSR), convert our National Defense University into a National Security University, restore strategic direction to Defense acquisition, and merge the Homeland Security Council (HSC) into the NSC. Taken together, these proposals add up to significant change.[48]

Seeking to enhance unity of effort, CSIS calls for creation of a classified National Security Planning Guidance (NSPG) in the first year of a new Presidential administration and updated every other year thereafter. The above-mentioned NSC Senior Director would have oversight of the NSPG as well as semi-annual reviews by agency deputies. This director would provide a stronger oversight of planning and execution but not involve the NSC in the conduct of operations. In short, unity of effort would be enhanced by an NSC that no longer acts in its current role of merely preparing decisions for Presidential review. Instead under the NSC-centric model, the NSC would have a more active role in taking Presidential intent and then ordering actions from the interagency. Recall the previous comments regarding long-term gains in unity of effort. CSIS has conducted a thorough review of the interagency. The result of that review is a sweeping set of recommendations to improve interagency effectiveness. Considering once more how much emphasis CSIS placed on unity of effort in its analysis, such a comprehensive review bodes well for an enduring and high level of unity of effort for the NSC-centric option. Unity of effort is scored high for NSC-centric.

Will it work? That depends on how much time is allowed to implement the changes called for in BG-N2. Allowing for a lengthy period of time to make changes and fine tune, as advocated by BG-N2, all the proposed changes appear rational and reasoned – it will work. However, time is not on the side of the US in this matter. Given the unfortunate realities of current fractious interagency cooperation and lack of Congressional intent so far in legislating change, it will take a number of months if not years to implement the BG-N2 changes. Therefore, for the short term, NSC-centric is only moderately suitable.

What is the resource cost not just in adopting NSC-centric, but also in policy implementation per NSC-centric? Does the US have or is it willing to commit the resources to use a NSC-centric approach in strategic policymaking? This is where NSC-centric could be

problematic. Adoption of all proposed changes would amount to significant costs in money and initial personnel turmoil. The financial cost of fully adopting the new S/CRS alone is estimated as between $100 million per year and up to four times that number.[49] The US has not yet shown a lasting willingness to commit large budget resources to bring about an NSC-centric model. In addition, a personnel float of 10-15% beyond current agency personnel strength levels will be needed if the US agencies start assigning out their people for IDA's at the other agencies as called for in BG-N2 and discussed above. Only the DOD has such a float built in today. Likely due to lack of money in their budgets, no agencies appear to be seriously augmenting their personnel numbers to create a personnel float. Feasibility under current budget levels is therefore low. Similar to previous arguments, if budget changes are made, feasibility will go up. However, that is not the reality today.

Will adoption of the changes demanded by BG-N2 be acceptable to all? Clearly, affected actors and institutions may bristle at being forced to undergo change. The legal issues are largely those as previously discussed. The previously discussed culture argument applies here as well. The military is comfortable in large measure with BG-N in general and specifically with NSC-centric because it suits their culture. However, for the other agencies, adoption of NSC-centric would require a cultural shift. This degrades acceptability. In light of the broad class of affected parties and inherent uncertainty in making an accurate prediction, acceptability must be ranked as moderate.

What is the risk associated with the NSC-centric option? The main risk appears to be that of inefficiencies or worse resulting from errors in properly implementing or sequencing the changes advocated by BG-N2. For this reason, policy development and implementation will likely be affected in a significant way as changes are made. It is difficult to predict if we would see degradation or perhaps an occasional enhancement in policy making as there are just too many variables in this complex and ambiguous situation. All in all, risk is assessed as moderate if this option is selected.

It is clear that improving the efficiency of interagency policy making is receiving increased emphasis in Washington, D.C. However, what conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the three main options in debate today?

Conclusions

Generally, having purposefully analyzed and scored each option in isolation in order to maintain objectivity, it must be said that many recommendations made by the interested parties to this debate could easily be used as appropriate no matter which choice is ultimately made. In

fact, if Congress gets involved in drafting a new national security act, it may well do just that in arriving at a clean-sheet model blending all three options for legislated improvements to interagency efficiency. This will likely be the reality when changes are finally made to the current system.

For the options requiring changes to be made, time was seen as a key factor relevant in the analysis of unity of effort. Recall that time is not on the side of the interagency as Congress grows increasingly impatient and real-world situations develop that call for an enhanced level of efficiency in the interagency.

A new federal law may be required to effect lasting change in the interagency. The U.S. Congress has passed notable legislation in this area to include the National Security Act of 1947. When Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 and mandated jointness in the military, it was seen largely as a result over frustration on the part of Congress over DOD foot-dragging in changing the way it operated. After waiting six years since the Desert One fiasco for DOD to make changes, Congress had had enough and it passed Goldwater-Nichols, thereby making the changes that are seen today as an improved, joint, DOD. Regarding interagency efficiency, Congress may act soon in a similar manner.

It appears that such change will not be voluntary by all concerned parties. A cultural sea change similar to that seen in DOD after passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 will have to occur in order to secure meaningful and lasting change to the current system. The S/CRS, under development by DOS, is staffed with many bright people, civilian and military. Their early products offered for public view demonstrate that they are taking a rational view of the difficult issues inherent in national-level interagency cooperation.

It is recognized in writing this paper that the organizations currently studied and targeted for change are not marching in lock step forward carrying a banner demanding change. Indeed, Chapter 9 of the first CSIS report (BG-N1[50]) was not warmly received in Congress regarding its recommendations for strengthening Congressional oversight of DOD. Nevertheless, the intensity and the very participants in the current debate, plus the current efforts discussed all give reason to believe that US leaders recognize that problems exist today in planning and conducting strategic-level interagency operations. Furthermore, belief is strong that US leaders are serious in developing a robust and more efficient national security policy making system.

Specific: Each of the three options received a score based on analysis and discussion of its merits as above. Scores of High = 3, Moderate (Mod) = 2, or Low = 1 were assigned in the categories of Suitability, Feasibility, Acceptability, and Unity of Effort (weighted 2X). Risk was scored inversely with High = 1, Moderate (Mod) = 2, and Low = 3. Each option received a total

score derived by adding together the factor scores received. Comparing the options, a higher score for one over another indicates better viability for the higher scoring option. Of course, opinions were shaped to some extent by the literature study conducted in preparing this paper.

	Suitability	Feasibility	Acceptability	Unity of Effort (2X)	Risk	Total
Maintain Status Quo	Low = 1	Mod = 2	Low = 1	Low = 2	High = 1	7
Lead Agency	Low = 1	High = 3	Mod = 2	Mod = 4	High = 1	11
NSC-Centric	Mod = 2	Low = 1	Mod = 2	High = 6	Mod = 2	13

Figure 1. Scoring Matrix

Status quo lagged far behind the other two options. The scoring matrix clearly shows that change is necessary. Maintaining the status quo is no longer a viable option. Perhaps mirroring the complexity seen today in arriving at a policy decision as to how to improve interagency effectiveness, lead agency ran close with NSC-centric, losing by only two points. However, note that NSC-centric received the highest score in the 2X-weighted factor of unity effort.

Recall the evaluation of time as a consideration in analyzing unity of effort. Time available today is short. By implication this fact favors the lead-agency option. Time necessary to make the changes recommended under NSC-centric is relatively long by comparison to time needed to implement lead agency. By implication, this fact goes against selection of the NSC-centric option.

A blended approach makes sense when considering that the present Presidential administration has demonstrated a willingness to utilize the lead agency approach in recent crises in order to achieve short-term gains in unity of effort, and thereby, interagency effectiveness. What is missing today is a focus of US efforts to implement the recommendations made by CSIS in the NSC-centric option. For long-term evolution of a more efficient national security policy making system, the US should adopt the various recommendations offered by CSIS under the NSC-Centric option.

A blended approach is recommended: continue to use lead agency to realize short-term gains in unity of effort while at the same time seeking to achieve long-term unity of effort gains by implementing changes called for by CSIS in its NSC-centric option.

Endnotes

    [1] U.S. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Pub 1-02 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 23 March 1994 as amended through 14 June 2000), 269.

    [2] Major concepts are drawn from the reference cited below in Endnote 3. As background offered for those who may not have had much exposure to date with related concepts the following is provided: Protection against attack is one of three core U.S. national interests. This is a vital national interest that has a corresponding grand strategic objective: Preserve American security. At the strategic level, we are taught that the United States uses diplomatic, information, military and economic (DIME) elements of power (EOP's) to achieve its strategic goals. US Army War College (USAWC) students are taught that three additional elements of power exist: financial, intelligence, and legal. Together, the seven EOP's are taught as "MIDLIFE" or "DIMEFIL." All the senior service schools are working together in sharing curriculum and concepts to provide a joint education. Accordingly, the DOD military members may be comfortable with the concept of seven EOP's. However, DOD civilians and those in the other federal agencies may reject the use of MIDLIFE or DIMEFIL, instead, choosing DIME as their preferred expression of national EOP's.

    [3] Alan G. Whittaker, Ph. D, Frederick C. Smith, and Ambassador Elizabeth McKune, "The National Security Process" in *National Security Policy and Strategy Selected Readings AY2006, Volume 2*, eds. COL James L Helis, USA and DNSS Faculty, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2005), 3.

    [4] Ibid. Major concepts regarding background on the development of the NSC are drawn from the reference cited above. For further information see also "Interagency Transformation, Education and After Action Review (ITEA)", National Defense University, Washington, D.C.; Internet Website; http://www.ndu.edu/itea/index.cfm?method=main.gov; accessed 3 March 2006.

    [5] Major concepts drawn from S/CRS, "Planning Framework for Reconstruction and Stabilization (R/S) Operations, briefing slides, Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of State, 12 May 2005.

    [6] DMSPO Faculty, eds., "Concept of Operations for the Employment of the JIACG", U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, January, 2006, 18. DMSPO attributes this paper as a work product of JFCOM, J-7.

    [7] Ibid.

    [8] USJFCOM J-9 Staff, "Overview and Action Plan, Interagency Management of Reconstruction & Stabilization Operations: Models for Planning, Management & Deployment", USJFCOM, Norfolk, VA, 2005, 18.

    [9] Ibid.

    [10] Major concepts drawn from USJFCOM J-9 Staff, "Overview and Action Plan"; USJFCOM J-9 Staff, "Information Paper – Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group (CRSG)", USJFCOM, Norfolk, VA, 2005; and, USJFCOM J-9 Staff, "Overview and Action Plan." A CRSG may be created for operations with or without significant US military involvement. A CRSG is

only created upon a recommendation by the Secretary of State (SecState). SecState makes such a recommendation to the NSC when she feels that an R&S engagement merits the more coordinated and comprehensive management attention of a CRSG. If he agrees, the APNSA establishes the CRSG in appropriate coordination with interagency partners. If the APNSA were to deem creation of a CRSG as unwarranted for a particular effort or circumstance, the appropriate Regional PCC of the NSC would retain management of the situation at issue. If created for a particular situation, the CRSG is a PCC-level group that reports to the DC. A CRSG establishes close coordination of any HRST and would further inform the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) of ongoing high-level planning decisions. The ACTs are deployed as required to one or more areas of a country. If deployed into a combat zone, then the ACTs provide an immediate civilian presence to work with military commanders, conduct assessments, engage local authorities, coordinate with international organizations, initiate programs in the field, and prepare for longer-term civilian programs. If deployed to an area that does not have combat, then the ACTs perform similarly, but instead of advising and working with a military commander, they instead advise the US Ambassador to the country and the ACT staff can augment embassy operations and coordinate provincial level ACTs.

[11] Major concepts drawn from DMSPO Faculty, eds., "Concept of Operations for the Employment of the JIACG". See in general the discussion found on pages 18 and 19.

[12] Ibid.

[13] NSPD 44, December 7, 2005; Internet; http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html; accessed 24 January, 2006.

[14] U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, "DSB Report: Institutionalizing Stability Operations Within DOD" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 22 January, 2006, cover letter, 1.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Condoleezza Rice, "The Promise of Democratic Peace," *The Washington Post*, 11 December 2005, sec. B, p. 7; available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/09/AR2005120901711.html ; Internet; accessed 25 January, 2006. In this piece Ms. Rice calls for "a realistic statecraft for a transformed world." She asserts that "our statecraft will succeed not simply because it is optimistic and idealistic but also because it is premised on sound logic and a proper understanding of the new realities we face." In describing a world changed markedly from the Westphalian model of sovereign states, she asserts that "the phenomenon of weak and failing states is not new, but the danger they now pose is unparalleled….Absent responsible state authority, threats that would and should be contained within a country's borders can now melt into the world and wreak untold havoc." In calling for the creation of "opportunities for individuals to assume ownership of their own lives and nations" she states that "the statecraft that America is called to practice in today's world is ambitious, even revolutionary, but it is not imprudent."

[18] Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks to the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service," Speech, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Washington, D.C., 18 January, 2006; text of speech available from http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm ; Internet; accessed 25 January, 2006. In speaking regarding her initiatives for transformational

diplomacy, she first defined its objective as "to work with our many partners around the world, to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system."

[19] Ibid. Calling for a transformation of our diplomacy and State Department and acknowledging that such will take a generation, she asks why our diplomats are not postured around the world in keeping with new world realities of population and the emerging regional importance of certain states. She calls for "a new emphasis on our regional and transnational strategies." Later in the speech she leads into a controversial area within the career diplomats of DOS in calling for "empowering our diplomats to work more jointly with our men and women in uniform." She goes on to explain briefly what led President Bush to create the S/CRS – "the need to enhance our ability to work more effectively at the critical intersections of diplomacy, democracy promotion, economic reconstruction and military security." Secretary Rice is well aware of the current promotion bias applied against those who accept difficult assignments around the world and consequently are away from the mainstream senior FSO leadership back in Washington, D.C. Desirous of having U.S. diplomats "eagerly seek our assignments working side-by-side with our men and women in uniform (she goes on to state that in order) to advance in their careers, our Foreign Service Officers must now serve in what we call hardship posts." Secretary Rice challenged the DOS's previous promotion bias by making this personnel policy statement nested in a public speech.

[20] U.S. Secretary of State, "New Direction for U.S. Foreign Assistance," Press Release, Washington, D.C., 19 January, 2006; text of Press Release available from http://www.state.gov/ r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59398.htm ; Internet; accessed 25 January, 2006.

[21] The USAID Administrator, Mr. Randall Tobias, was ordered to now serve concurrently in and carry out the duties of a new position: Director of Foreign Assistance. Mr. Tobias "has been charged with pulling together $19 million worth of scattered assistance programs at the State Department and USAID." In its Unified Action Initiative, USJFCOM will explore how to coordinate more closely the efforts of USAID workers with those of soldiers and diplomats.

[22] Major concepts drawn from Paul Michael Severance, *Characterizing the Construct of Organizational Unity of Effort in the Interagency National Security Policy Process*, Ph. D Dissertation (Falls Church, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 25 April 2005). Simply read the abstract of Severance's dissertation to see how much importance he places on the construct of unity of effort. His nearly 200-page dissertation is underpinned by considerations regarding unity of effort.

[23] Ibid., 60.

[24] Ibid. Cites U.S. GAO Report 02-610, 2002.

[25] Ibid. Cites U.S. GAO Report 02-549T, 2002. Severance writes that Hawley (see End Note 28 below), in his evaluation of U.S. responses to complex contingency operations suggests that the interagency policymaking process can be significantly advanced by the development of a distinctive lexicon for interagency products that facilitate realistic policy option development….Relevant concepts and special terms should capture what policy planning is all about and differentiate it from agency planning.

[26] Ibid., 66.

[27] Severance, 62.

[28] Len Hawley "Interagency Planning for Crisis Intervention" prepared for discussion by Working Group 4 (Interagency and Coalition Operations) of the CSIS Study *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a new Strategic Era* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 8 May 2003), 9.

[29] Col Brad M. Ward, USA, *Strategic Influence Operations – The Information Connection*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 7 April 2003), 6.

[30] Lawrence B. Wilkerson, "The White House Cabal," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 October 2005.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Severance, 2.

[33] Clark A. Murdock, Michele Flournoy et al, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a new Strategic Era, Phase 2 Report* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005), 14.

[34] Severance, 19.

[35] Hawley, 9.

[36] Murdock, 20.

[37] Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Iraq Without a Plan" in *National Security Policy and Strategy Selected Readings AY2006, Volume 2*, eds. COL James L Helis, USA and DNSS Faculty, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2005), 70.

[38] Murdock, 6.

[39] Neyla Arnas, Charles Barry, and Robert B. Oakley, *Harnessing the Interagency for Complex Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, August 2005), 7.

[40] Martin j. Gorman and Alexander Krongard, "A Goldwater-Nichols Act for the U.S. Government; Institutionalizing the Interagency Process," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 39, 4th Quarter 2005, 51. Endnote 3 Cites Gen Peter Pace from remarks he made to the Marine Corps Association at Naval Institute Forum 2004.

[41] Hawley, 10.

[42] Murdock, 20.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Murdock, 20.

[45] Arnas, 7.

[46] Murdock, 20.

[47] Arnas, 7.

[48] Major concepts drawn from Murdock, 8 and 41.

[49] Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascal, "Addressing State Failure," *Foreign Affairs*, 84 no. 4 (July/August 2005): 162.

[50] Major concepts drawn from: Clark A. Murdock, Michele Flournoy et al, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a new Strategic Era, Phase 1 Report* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004), 68.