

# Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

## Putting the *Inter* into the Interagency

BY ERIC A. JORGENSEN

**I**nteragency is a made-up word that is reasonable as an adjective but only a fairy tale as a noun. That will not change until the executive branch of the Federal Government is dramatically reorganized in order to put the *inter* into the interagency.

This reorganization must be done *horizontally* (to align worldwide departmental and agency regional areas of interest and to integrate regional responsibilities under true interagency leadership within regional interagency directorates) and *vertically* (to allow the President's senior leadership team to administer regional interagency directorates as true interagency efforts). Only then will executive branch departments and agencies move beyond merely coordinating individual disparate efforts, as they do in their current incarnation at best, to being greater than the sum of their parts, and intending and achieving truly integrated effects, with the kinds of dominant and persistent results necessary to advance U.S. interests in this volatile, interconnected 21<sup>st</sup>-century world.

Persistent, broad-ranging conflict is a fact of life that impacts and threatens U.S. interests around the globe daily, whether directly or indirectly—and even apparently benign global connectivity comes with risk and can lead to catastrophic loss of American treasure, lives, or both. Tactical and operational successes are far from enough in this kind of world. To advance its interests in the long term, the United States must efficiently achieve strategic successes, based upon well-coordinated, effective intent—intent which first develops well-crafted strategic policy and then faithfully executes that policy. Unfortunately, the executive branch as it currently exists cannot make this happen, despite the fact that in recent years the notion of “Interagency” has come into vogue as a proper noun, as if executive branch departments and agencies represent anything like a coherent organizational construct. The sad reality is that, collectively, these departments and agencies

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represent merely a hodgepodge of enterprises that function mostly autonomously—or at least with little shared strategic direction.

The executive branch functions this way because it is designed to do so, with Cabinet-level secretarial and departmental independence at its core. As long as that design remains unchanged, the Interagency, by definition, does not—and cannot—exist.

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Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, describes the current state of affairs as follows:

*The ability of the United States to achieve its national strategic objectives is dependent on the effectiveness of the U.S. Government in employing the instruments of national power. These instruments of national power . . . are normally coordinated by the appropriate governmental officials, often with National Security Council (NSC) direction.*<sup>1</sup>

The first sentence seems like an assertion of obvious fact, the second like plaintive recognition of a reality that is much less than ideal.

This less-than-ideal reality is unacceptable. Since, as JP 1 asserts, the ability of the United States to achieve its national strategic objectives is at stake, the instruments of national power should not merely *normally*, but *always*, be coordinated by the appropriate governmental officials, with direction from the President's senior leadership team not merely *often*, but *in every case*.

This new reality will come to fruition only if the executive branch is transformed by statutory structural, operational, and human adjustments that produce coordinated and concerted efforts from every functional area. To this end, many observers have called for an “Interagency Goldwater-Nichols Act,” along the lines of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. This kind of legislative action is precisely what is needed, and this article fleshes out the changes that must be part of that legislation, with emphasis on how those changes will address U.S. security concerns, both foreign and domestic.

Making the necessary changes will require immense political will and intense cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of government, but executive branch actions must be synthesized far beyond what exists today, with directive statutory leadership enabled and provided from the top down, and organizational inefficiencies eliminated throughout the enterprise. Rather than excusing American leadership for not taking such drastic steps, current and expected resource limitations make the imperative only more pronounced. We can no longer afford for the executive branch of government to be ineffective and inefficient in dealing with the menacing security challenges of our times—or with the promising security opportunities.

### Not Just Unity of Effort, But Unity of Effect

*Unity of command* remains one of the nine recognized Principles of War considered key to achieving dominant and persistent military results.<sup>2</sup> The term has nevertheless been displaced among military officers of late by the term *unity of effort*, as a concession to the complications that come with multiagency and

multinational operations. Unity of effort has in turn become a bedrock concept in the parlance of the so-called Interagency.

JP 1 explains the relationship of the two terms like this:

*Unity of command means all forces operate under a single [commander] with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. Unity of effort, however, requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective, although they are not necessarily part of the same command structure. During multinational operations and interagency coordination, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort becomes paramount.*<sup>3</sup>

Field Manual (FM) 3–0, *Operations*, makes the point more bluntly:

*To compensate for limited unity of command, commanders concentrate on achieving unity of effort. Consensus building, rather than direct command authority, is often the key element of successful . . . operations.*<sup>4</sup>

This kind of compensation is a concession to less-than-ideal organizational structures that would otherwise limit, delay, or even render impossible the success of multinational and multiagency operations. But this concentration on unity of effort entails wasted effort and diluted effects. It is a concession that may be necessary in a multinational setting for political reasons, but it should not be necessary in a U.S. Government multiagency setting.

The executive branch should be concentrating not on establishing unity of effort, but rather on producing unity of effect, a concept that derives neither from military doctrine nor anywhere else conventionally apropos, but from

Edgar Allan Poe, a highly unlikely but nevertheless helpful source.

When speaking of unity of effect, Poe insists writers should first decide what effect they want to create in their readers, and then apply all their creative powers toward achieving that effect.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis is on the desired end results defined in advance. But Poe is addressing writers with both the responsibility and the authority to achieve the desired effects. When speaking of unity of effort, JP 1 is addressing military commanders who lack that kind of responsibility and authority—and is simultaneously implicitly acknowledging that no one is any better equipped to lead multiagency operations. This must change.

That change starts with aligning how executive branch departments and agencies look at the world and continues with having them look at the world together, as fielded forces who belong to the same authority structures. Interagency unity of effect requires both unity of focus achieved via horizontal reorganization, and unity of authority achieved via vertical reorganization.

### **Horizontal Reorganization: Regional Alignment**

Statutory horizontal reorganization is necessary to align worldwide departmental and agency regional areas of interest and to integrate regional responsibilities under true interagency leadership. This requires the birthing of regional interagency directorates, described in detail below, but begins with building a common global operating picture for the entire executive branch from the White House down. Current disparate individual departmental and agency regional orientations owe their existence to generally logical and helpful bureaucratic biases and to deeply entrenched tradition, but aligning how executive branch departments and

agencies look at the world regionally is picking low-hanging fruit, and is long overdue.

Presidential Policy Directive 1 of the Obama administration, dated February 13, 2009, indicated that “an early meeting” of the NSC Deputies Committee would establish the new administration’s Interagency Policy Committees (formerly known as Policy Coordination Committees) and their mandates, regional and otherwise.<sup>6</sup> No additional Presidential Policy Directives have been publicly released to confirm the regional orientation within the current Executive Office of the President, but a 2009 briefing described the proposed committee framework<sup>7</sup> (see table 1), in comparison with the committee frameworks of April 2007 and April 2008.

The May 2009 list represents a consolidation of NSC committees, which should provide improved strategic perspective. It also represents a further movement toward alignment with Department of Defense (DOD) regional combatant commands, and away from alignment with State Department regional bureaus. Table 2 shows how State and Defense regional areas compare to the May 2009 proposal for NSC regional areas. The misalignment among the three is not great, but begs the question: Why not eliminate the misalignment altogether?

“The world today can be much better understood if you think of it from the perspective of regions and not states”

The most glaring disconnects among the disparate systems include the following: State puts Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India together in what it calls South Asia, while DOD has Afghanistan and Pakistan assigned to U.S.

Central Command (USCENTCOM), but India assigned to U.S. Pacific Command; State combines Israel and the Arab countries surrounding it in its Near East Bureau, while DOD assigns Israel to U.S. European Command, but the rest of the Middle East falls under USCENTCOM, along with Afghanistan and Pakistan; and U.S. Africa Command is now responsible for the entire continent of Africa, with the exception of Egypt, which is assigned to USCENTCOM, while State separates all of North Africa from sub-Saharan Africa.

In February 2009, President Obama’s national security advisor, Jim Jones, stated, “The world today can be much better understood if you think of it from the perspective of regions and not states.”<sup>8</sup> This is a natural outgrowth of the increasing interconnectivity around the world, and highlights why the executive branch’s plethora of regional orientations—to include permutations not discussed above, in the Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and beyond—represents a problem. Jones addressed that problem in an interview with Karen DeYoung of the *Washington Post*, also in February 2009, by indicating that executive branch organizational maps would soon be “redrawn to ensure that all departments and agencies take the same regional approach to the world.”<sup>9</sup> It is a logical adjustment to make—but it has not happened as of the publishing date of this article.

### Regional Interagency Directorates

Regional alignment allows the creation of regional interagency directorates, led by regional interagency directors with true operational authority over all assigned personnel.

When laying out what it calls the simplest option to produce such operational authority

**Table 1. Development of Regional NSC Committees**

April 2007	April 2008	May 2009 (proposed)
Western Hemisphere	Western Hemisphere	Western Hemisphere
	Mexico/Central America	
Europe and Eurasia	Europe and Eurasia	Europe, Russia, and Central Asia
	Russia	
East Asia (and the Pacific)	East Asia (and the Pacific)	Asia (and the Pacific)
South (and Central) Asia	South and Central Asia	Central Region ❖ South Asia ❖ Middle East ❖ Persian Gulf
Near East and North Africa	Iraq	
	Afghanistan	
	Iran	
	Syria-Lebanon	
(Sub-Saharan) Africa	Africa	Africa

Note: Parentheses show clarifications to the official committee names.

for an integrated civil-military chain of command in a surge environment, the Project on National Security Reform suggests *operational direction*,<sup>10</sup> a term used throughout joint publications. Although not defined in JP 1–02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, the term *operational direction* has been defined in other military publications to mean a commander’s operational authority over forces not administratively assigned to that commander. It includes “the authority to assign tasks, designate objectives, synchronize and integrate actions, and give authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission.”<sup>11</sup> But operational direction is not enough, and integrated civil-military chains of command must be established as day-to-day reality, rather than merely in response to surge requirements.

The Air Force applies operational direction to its unit associations, wherein Reserve and Active component members are functionally integrated, but retain separate organizational structures and chains of command.<sup>12</sup> In an associate organizational structure, “component commanders . . . issue orders to their subordinates to follow the operational direction of the agreed upon specified/designated and typically senior members of the other component for the purpose of accomplishing their associated unit’s mission.”<sup>13</sup>

This kind of authority is similar to the kind of authority combatant commanders had over their forces prior to Goldwater-Nichols, and much like an Ambassador’s over non-State Department Country Team members—and it is not strong enough to empower effective and efficient interagency operations.

**Table 2. State, DOD, and Proposed NSC Regional Areas**

State	DOD	NSC
Western Hemisphere	U.S. Northern Command	Western Hemisphere
	U.S. Southern Command	
Europe and Eurasia	U.S. European Command	Europe, Russia, and Central Asia
East Asia and the Pacific	U.S. Pacific Command	Asia (and the Pacific)
South and Central Asia		
Near East (and North Africa)	U.S. Central Command	Central Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ South Asia</li> <li>❖ Middle East</li> <li>❖ Persian Gulf</li> </ul>
(Sub-Saharan) Africa	U.S. Africa Command	Africa

Note: Parentheses show clarifications to the official committee names.

Formally known as Chiefs of Mission, Ambassadors are the traditional representatives overseas, where each country with which the United States maintains direct diplomatic relations has within its borders an American Embassy led by an Ambassador, who is appointed by the President and who is said to speak on the President’s behalf. On paper, the position of Ambassador is prestigious. As explained in the Department of State *Foreign Affairs Handbook*, the President directly gives each Chief of Mission

*full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all U.S. Government executive branch employees within the host country or in the relevant Mission to an international organization, except those personnel under the command of a U.S. geographic area military commander or on the staff of an international organization.*<sup>14</sup>

This responsibility is administered by the Chief of Mission with the help of the Country Team, a concept established in a 1951 memorandum written by General Lucius Clay while he was serving as military governor in postwar Germany: “To insure the full coordination of the U.S. effort, U.S. representatives at the country level shall constitute a team under the leadership of the Ambassador.”<sup>15</sup>

The Country Team is the combination of State Department personnel with the representatives of other agencies assigned to work under the Chief of Mission mandate established by the President. Individual Country Teams are configured differently, depending on country size, Embassy size, and the specific nature of American national interests in a particular country; but the largest

Country Teams can include representatives from more than 40 agencies, including DOD.<sup>16</sup> The Presidential mandate is significant and the assigned responsibility is broad. With that said, and even though some may argue that Country Teams are the best example of interagency success, we must ask whether Country Teams are up to the task.

Ambassador Robert Oakley insists they are, with urgent motivation. “Without an effective Country Team,” he states, “there can be no prospect of success in achieving national security objectives.”<sup>17</sup> It is a bold claim. But Oakley himself acknowledges deleterious structural problems in Country Teams akin to those which hamstrung joint military operations prior to Goldwater-Nichols. First, Ambassadors lack the means to exert their Presidentially assigned authority, including input to the performance assessments of non-State Department personnel; second, Embassy staff structure encourages all personnel to pursue the parochial interests of their own organizations at the expense of integrated efforts because integrated efforts are too difficult to coordinate, even when personnel would like to do so; third, Ambassadors do not control the financial resources assigned to each organization’s Embassy personnel; and fourth, personnel numbers and training—even for Ambassadors themselves—are often inadequate, giving Ambassadors insufficient ability to pursue broad but specific outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

These structural problems should be fixed in every American Embassy. But with over 190 independent states in the world ranging in size and consequence from China to Nauru, Country Teams, while important, are clearly not the appropriate linchpin in achievement of U.S. national security objectives.

Ambassador Oakley’s prescription for strengthening Country Teams includes

providing “more authority and operational autonomy” to Ambassadors and their teams to enable them to pursue integrated national objectives. But, as Oakley himself admits, establishing “integrated policies and priorities for *regions* and individual countries” is the beginning of the equation<sup>19</sup>—which takes us back to General Jones’s assertion that the “world today can be much better understood if you think of it from the perspective of regions and not states.”<sup>20</sup>

Country Ambassadors have limited resources and limited perspectives, and they are embedded in a weak line of authority, despite their titular claims to direct lines to the President. In reality, those direct lines exist

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only in times of crisis—but not always even then, depending on the countries in question, the crisis in question, and events in the rest of the affected region and around the world at the time. Ambassadors, in fact, instead coordinate most routinely with the assistant secretaries responsible for State Department regional bureaus, and those assistant secretaries answer to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. That under secretary is the fourth-ranking State Department official, after the Secretary of State and two deputies, is only one of six under secretaries, and is the only one whose responsibilities are regionally rather than functionally oriented.<sup>21</sup>

The preponderance of State Department effort at the highest levels therefore goes

to functional rather than regional concerns, and State Department structure buries Ambassadors several layers down from the top, with their immediate supervisors all stationed in Washington, DC, despite being responsible for coordinating global diplomatic efforts with scores of distant Embassies. Those supervisors—the regional assistant secretaries—do not serve as diplomats themselves, conceivably because this would infringe upon the mandates of the Ambassadors for whom they provide coordination, as well as upon the mandate of the Secretary of State, who serves as our nation’s chief diplomat and principal overseas emissary. This complicated hierarchy hardly seems like a recipe for integrated worldwide action.

In his campaign for retooling Country Teams in order to provide for that kind of integrated action, Ambassador Oakley makes the following case for new cross-functional, locale-oriented authority for each country Ambassador:

*Given the evolving security environment and challenges confronting our nation, it is time to revalidate the Country Team’s critical role in achieving U.S. national security objectives and to rethink the concept of the Country Team as a committee working for a lead agency. Instead, the Country Team of the future must be reconfigured as a cross functional team with an empowered national leader. The Country Team’s makeover must be done holistically—to include new strategy and planning approaches, decisionmaking procedures, personnel training and incentives, and resource allocation flexibility.<sup>22</sup>*

This is a reasonable case to make, but it is a case being made at the wrong level, where this authority would be dispersed among more than 180 Ambassadors.

Are regional Ambassadors the answer? Should the regional assistant secretaries be “forward deployed” out of Washington and remade as regional Ambassadors with the cross-functional, locale-oriented authority Oakley proposes for country Ambassadors? Despite Oakley’s own objections,<sup>23</sup> the creation of regional Ambassadors parallel to regional combatant commanders is definitely long overdue, but regional Ambassadors are not an adequate interagency solution any more than country Ambassadors, because regional Ambassadors will face the same kinds of structural problems present in today’s individual Embassies, as delineated above.

Oakley argues for bolstering the preeminence of each Ambassador around the world in order to facilitate integration of the instruments of national power. The pressing issue, however, is not the potency of the authority of Ambassadors, but the need for an entirely different kind of authority altogether. Despite his mistake in emphasis, Oakley eloquently addresses this fact himself:

*The critical challenges to our nation’s interests demand a new Country Team concept and a more effective structure capable of tackling the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The signal mark of success for the new Country Team will be changing the way other members of the Country Team perceive the Ambassador. Instead of a Department of State representative, the future Ambassador must be, and be seen as, a national representative empowered to make tradeoffs among instruments of power and to develop clear strategies to advance U.S. national interests. Simply reasserting the Ambassador’s national authority is inadequate. Instead, the Ambassador*

*must be empowered as a team leader with authority to generate national security team outcomes and must be selected, trained, and rewarded accordingly.*<sup>24</sup>

Country Teams should be stronger, as Oakley suggests, but they are too narrowly focused to facilitate cohesive foreign policy themselves. Regional Ambassadors should be established, but their role should be conducting regional diplomacy by coordinating among their assigned country Ambassadors, rather than integrating the instruments of national power. Whether they are at the country or regional levels, Ambassadors will always be State Department representatives first, rather than the “national representatives” Oakley proposes. He is on the right track, but his argument needs to be taken to the next level in two ways.

First, Congress must establish regional teams with true cross-functional character. Refine the last quotation from Oakley by replacing *Country Team* with *regional interagency directorate*. Second, these regional teams must be led by “national representatives” not tied to a particular department or agency, leaders who have true operational authority over all assigned personnel. Further refine Oakley’s passage by replacing *Ambassador* with *regional interagency director* and give these directors not only *operational direction* over their organizational membership but also *operational control*. Only in this way do we get the effective structure Oakley correctly prescribes, with leadership that can be “empowered to make tradeoffs among instruments of power and to develop clear strategies to advance U.S. national interests.”

Operational control is the kind of authority exercised by post–Goldwater–Nichols combatant commanders. It “does not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics or

matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training,” but it goes beyond operational direction by providing “full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions.”<sup>25</sup>

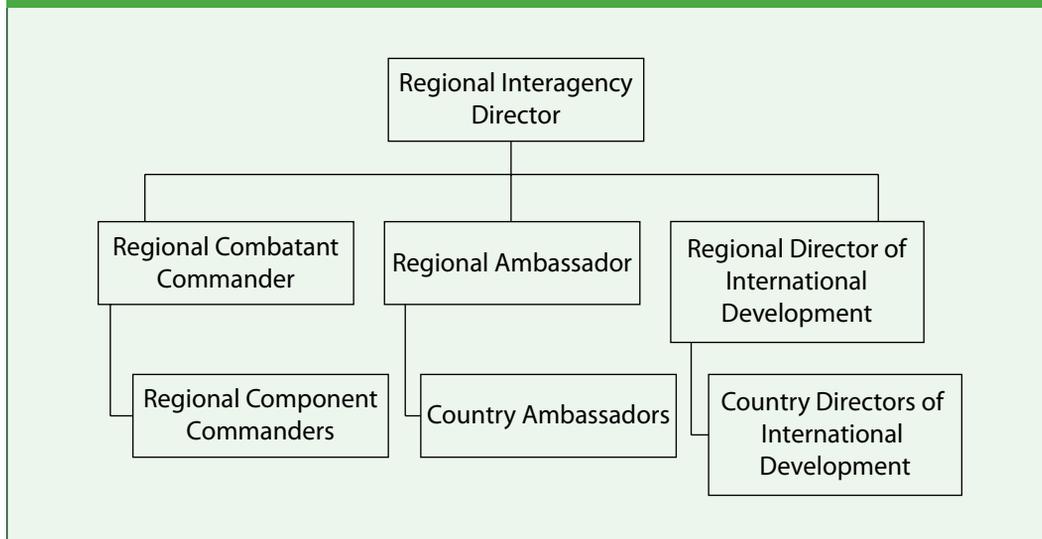
**regional teams must be led by “national representatives” who have true operational authority over all assigned personnel**

The exclusion of logistics, administration, discipline, internal organization, and unit training is significant. Authority over these aspects of command properly remains with the military departments to which individual members and units subordinate to joint commands belong. But operational control does include authority both to organize commands and forces, and to direct all aspects of operations and joint training. This takes it to the level needed for interagency leadership, wherein lines of authority over all directorate members must be fused together to run up to the regional interagency director, just as the military chains of command in combatant commands are fused together to run up to the combatant commander.

Overseas regional interagency directorates establish the primary foreign policy relationships depicted in figure 1, with additional embedded input from all other appropriate Federal authorities. The regional interagency director has operational control over all the forces represented.

Domestic regional interagency directorates establish homeland security relationships that

**Figure 1. Overseas Regional Interagency Directorate Leadership**



coordinate the efforts of all appropriate Federal, state, and local municipal authorities, including Federal and state military forces.

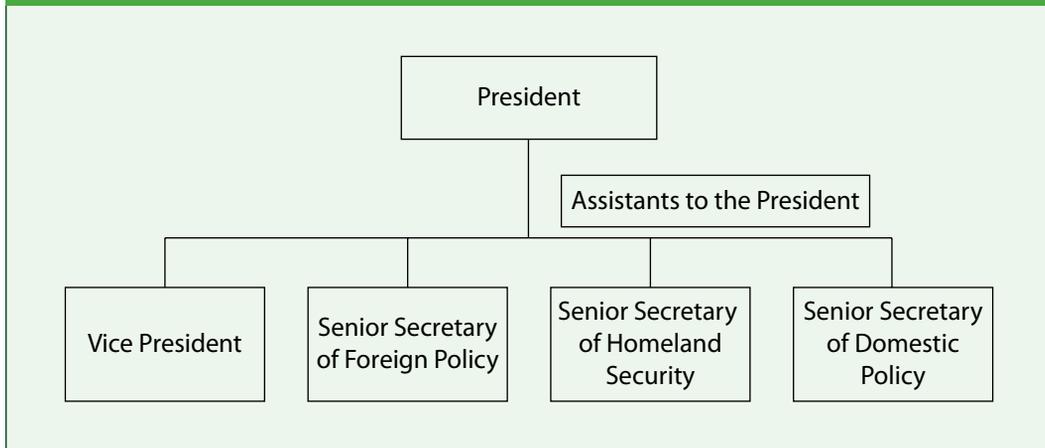
Jurisdictional issues make homeland security relationships more complicated than foreign policy relationships, and, as a result, domestic directorates do not lend themselves to a clean permanent wiring diagram like overseas directorates do. Homeland security must instead be operationalized on a case-by-case basis via task forces. The horizontal reorganization described here, including regional alignment and nested authority, is nevertheless just as essential domestically as it is overseas in order to enable cohesive global policy implementation by operationalizing integrated cross-functional efforts around the world, including within the United States.

All the recent ad hoc interagency coordination cells and working groups—as well as the State Department’s Interagency Management System and even the DOD integrated combatant command model in U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Southern Command—have been designed short of providing true operational interagency authority in order to avoid offending or threatening any portion of the executive branch bureaucracy. Creating regional interagency directors with operational control over their forces establishes that missing authority. That authority must, however, come down to those directors from the President via a reorganized interagency Cabinet, just as the authority of combatant commanders now comes down to them from the President via only the Secretary of Defense. Furthermore, the lines of authority must remain the same whether or not military forces are engaged in combat in order to eliminate confusion and to increase effectiveness.

### **Vertical Reorganization: The Cabinet Reinvented**

Statutory vertical reorganization is necessary to allow the President’s senior leadership team to administer regional interagency directorates as true interagency efforts, in place of the ad hoc

Figure 2. The President's Security Council

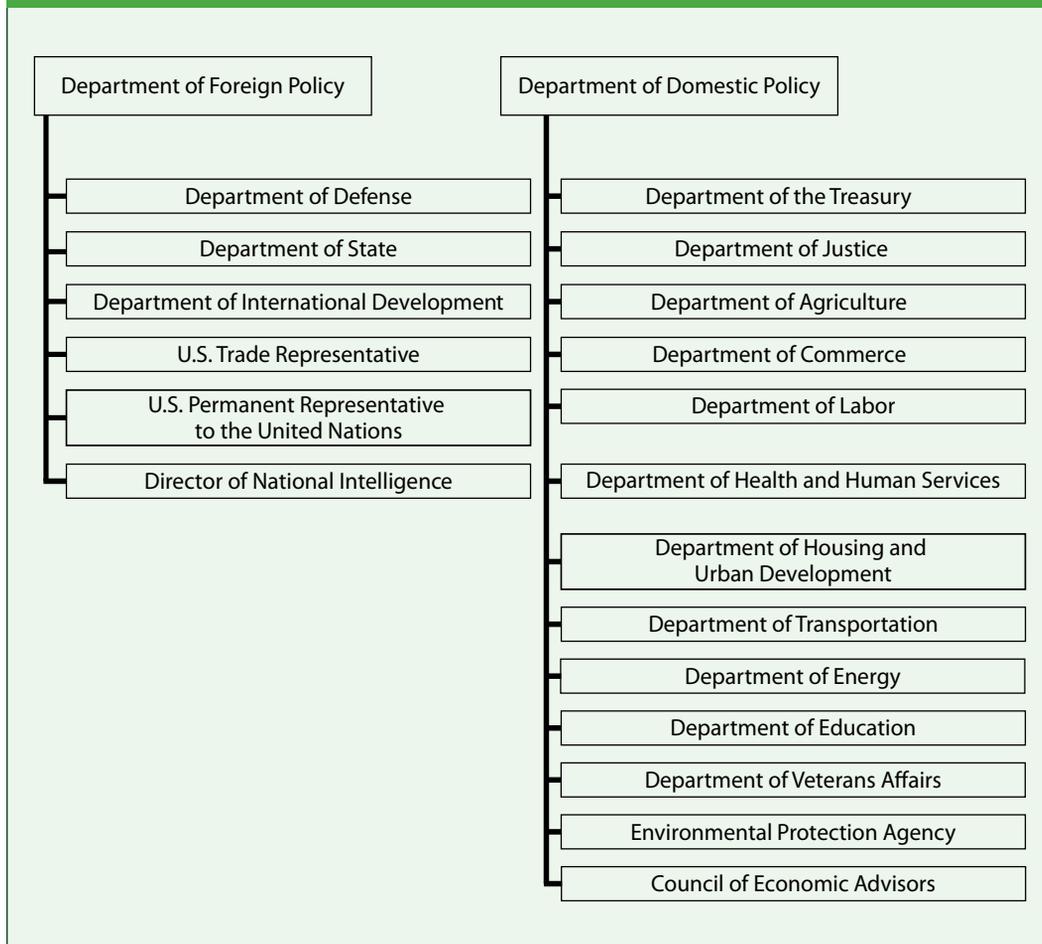


multiagency efforts over which Cabinet members currently preside, with less-than-ideal coordination of effort and much less-than-ideal success. This requires reinvention of the Cabinet, which establishes new lines of authority that connect regional interagency directors to the President, with appropriate but minimal separation. These changes enable cohesive policy development and activation, and empower the integrated cross-functional implementation efforts of the government's new regional directorates.

The reinvented Cabinet must consist, first of all, of a new senior leadership team called the President's Security Council, designed to address only the highest levels of logically integrated policy. Statutory council members include the President and Vice President, a new Senior Secretary of Foreign Policy, the current Secretary of Homeland Security (renamed the Senior Secretary of Homeland Security), and a new Senior Secretary of Domestic Policy. These Presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed individuals provide the core of a new Senior Cabinet, with the White House Chief of Staff and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget added as Senior Cabinet-level officials. Staff assistance in the Executive Office of the President is coordinated by the current Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (renamed the Assistant to the President for Foreign Policy), the current Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism, and a new Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy (see figure 2).

The Senior Secretary of Homeland Security presides over the Department of Homeland Security configured as it is now, but elevated in prominence due to the critical nature of its concerns and the challenging nature of the coordination required to address those concerns. The Senior Secretary of Foreign Policy presides over a new Department of Foreign Policy, which includes the Departments of Defense and State, plus a new Department of International Development built upon the U.S. Agency for International Development. Additional Department of Foreign Policy elements include the U.S. trade representative, the permanent representative to the United Nations, and the Intelligence Community under the direction of the Director of National Intelligence.

Figure 3. The Departments of Foreign Policy and Domestic Policy



Finally, the new Senior Secretary of Domestic Policy presides over those Cabinet positions not in the Departments of Homeland Security and Foreign Policy, collected into a new Department of Domestic Policy (see figure 3).

With each new senior secretary exercising the same power of integration conceptually, if not yet actually, exercised by the current Secretary of Homeland Security, the President’s Security Council is thereby empowered to develop broad integrated national policy and to direct its implementation in all the subdepartments for which the senior secretaries are responsible. Only then does the executive branch finally become an actual Interagency—working like the proper noun that has come into common, if so far inaccurate, use.

The leadership of the new Department of Foreign Policy takes the place of the National Security Council, with the responsibility and authority to effect foreign policy rather than merely to advise the President. The leadership of the Department of Homeland Security takes the place

of the Homeland Security Council, with the responsibility and authority to effect homeland security policy. And the leadership of the new Department of Domestic Policy takes the places of both the Domestic Policy Council and National Economic Council, with the responsibility and authority to effect domestic/economic policy. All told, the combined responsibility and authority in these three departments allow their leaders to provide broad policy guidance to the entire executive branch and to direct all the instruments of national power.

In place of the current nonstatutory interagency advisors and large staffs attached to the National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, Domestic Policy Council, and National Economic Council, the three senior secretaries become senior statutory interagency leaders, and those staffs become departmental staffs directly serving those leaders. The senior secretaries themselves in turn directly serve the President—whose senior-most secretary-level advisors number 3, rather than 14, as they now do, and whose senior-most Cabinet members number 6, rather than 21.

### **Executive Office of the President Reinvented**

Whereas the Assistants to the President for National Security and Homeland Security now chair their corresponding Principals Committees, following the Cabinet changes described above, the senior secretaries instead chair and lead their own Principals Committees, tied to their own departmental Deputies Committees and Interagency Policy Committees. The assistants to the President in turn become Presidential advisors who have the freedom to study policy options in their focus areas and to advise the President, without the necessity to coordinate among disparate

departments and agencies. Since the senior secretaries have staffs of their own, the new National Security Staff now “supporting all White House policymaking activities related to international, transnational and homeland security matters, and under the direction of the National Security Advisor”<sup>26</sup> can be reduced in size, but simultaneously given increased purview to include domestic policy. This new staff is renamed the President’s Security Council Staff, and falls under the direction of the Assistant to the President for Foreign Policy, dual-hatted as the President’s Security Advisor. The Assistants to the President for Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism and for Domestic Policy are dual-hatted as Deputy President’s Security Advisors.

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This new Executive Office of the President staff construct allows White House senior policy staff to function much more like it did in the early Nixon administration than it did in the later Nixon administration. Henry Kissinger initially guided that staff in studying a wide array of interrelated issues and then presented the President with the pros and cons of all realistic policy options. Later, Kissinger began to dominate major international negotiations himself, rather than coordinating careful study of the issues.<sup>27</sup>

The primary problem with the current Cabinet structure is the built-in independence of Cabinet-level leadership and organizations, which widely disperses responsibilities,

authorities, and resources, while the level of oversight provided by the National Security Advisor in the President's place is dependent upon the relative strength of his or her personality and the personalities of individual Cabinet members. Structural change to fix that often wayward Cabinet-level independence is long overdue, as is downgrading the nonstatutory power given by the President to the National Security Advisor out of necessity born from that independence.

Ivo Daalder and I.M. Destler underscore exactly why the power afforded national security advisors since President Kennedy must be reduced, in favor of statutory authority and responsibility for senior secretaries:

*National security advisers have a tough job. They must serve the president yet balance this primary allegiance with a commitment to managing an effective and efficient policy process. They must be forceful in driving that process forward to decisions yet represent other agencies' views fully and faithfully. They must be simultaneously strong and collegial, able to enforce discipline across the government while engaging senior officials and their agencies rather than excluding them. They must provide confidential advice to the president yet establish a reputation as an honest broker between the conflicting officials and interests across the government. They must be indispensable to the process and the president yet operate in the shadows as much as possible. They must do the heavy lifting yet allow others to receive the glory. Above all, they must ensure that the president and his senior advisers give thorough and careful consideration to the handful of critical issues that will make or break the*

*administration. And they must handle all issues, large and small, in a manner that establishes and retains the trust of their senior administration colleagues.*<sup>28</sup>

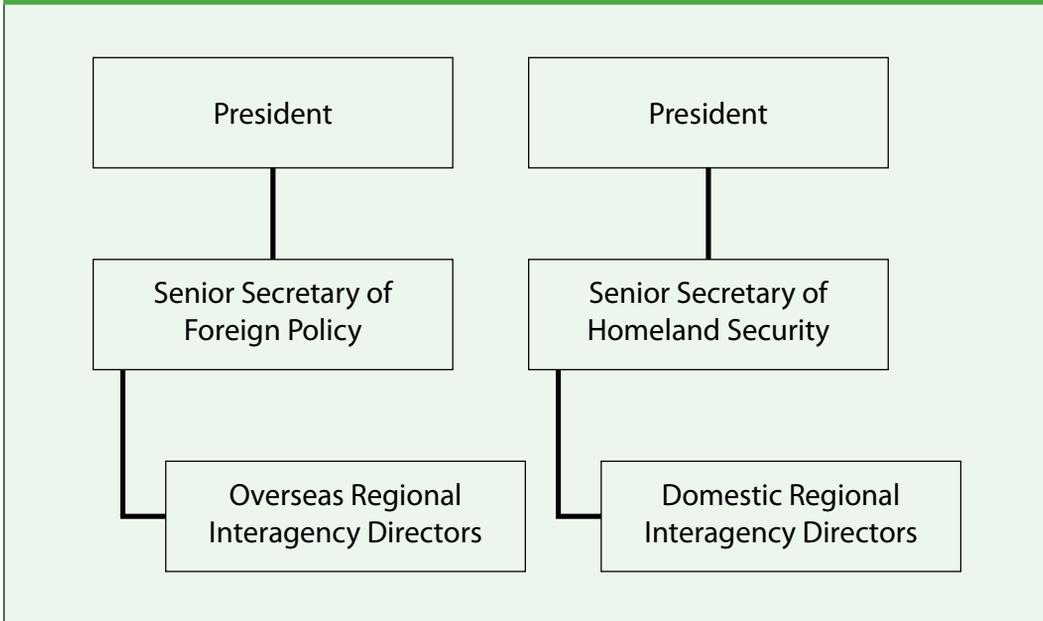
Daalder and Destler point out that U.S. law makes no provision for the National Security Advisor position, but they nevertheless call the role “an institutional fact,” one which “by all odds . . . will remain so.”<sup>29</sup> Rather than justifying the position, however, their explanation of the position's challenges instead justifies statutory creation of senior secretaries who have the responsibility and authority to represent the views of their own broadly integrated departments and to enforce discipline within those departments, without having to worry about offending their colleagues, as national security advisors must. The National Security Advisor should not be put in a position responsible for striking a balance “between being assertive and not intruding on the roles of others,”<sup>30</sup> and should certainly not be what Daalder and Destler name, “aside from the president himself . . . potentially the most important person in government today.”<sup>31</sup> Congress must fix this with statutory change by empowering true interagency leadership in the form of senior secretaries.

### **Interagency Lines of Authority**

Reinvention of the Cabinet provides a policy apparatus in which regional interagency directors reside within lines of effective authority made clear by reinvention of the Executive Office of the President, which removes the President's nonstatutory advisors from those lines.

Overseas regional interagency directors answer to the Senior Secretary of Foreign Policy, since overseas directorates address primarily the 3Ds of foreign policy (defense, diplomacy, and development), although they must

**Figure 4. Lines of Authority for Overseas and Domestic Regional Interagency Directorates**



necessarily incorporate all the other instruments of national power as well. The line of authority in this case runs from the President to the directors through the Senior Secretary of Foreign Policy (see figure 4).

Domestic regional interagency directors answer to the Senior Secretary of Homeland Security, since domestic directorates enable effective and efficient interagency responses to homeland terrorism and natural disasters, already the purview of the Department of Homeland Security. The line of authority in this case runs from the President to the directors through the Senior Secretary of Homeland Security (see figure 4).

Placed at the top of regional interagency directorates, regional directors are thereby clearly designated the parties responsible for interagency policy implementation, while being given authority that integrates the necessary instruments of national power. Regional directors are the President's representatives in the field, with both the responsibility and the authority to get the job done. This is how the Interagency will finally be born as a proper noun.

### **Building a True Interagency**

With the executive branch redesigned as described, the Interagency finally truly exists as a proper noun capable of moving U.S. Government efforts beyond merely reacting to domestic and foreign circumstances, to shaping the global environment in favor of freedom and opportunity both at home and abroad, even amid the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That strategic-level success becomes possible because horizontal and vertical reorganization enables both integrated policy implementation in the

field and integrated policymaking at the top, and because it ties them together.

A somewhat dated article from the Winter 1998 issue of *Parameters* contains a short-sighted sentiment still prevalent today: “If an interagency coordinating body is to have any hope of succeeding in the complicated and ever-changing game of intervention operations, then it must dedicate itself to getting beyond organizations as they exist on paper.”<sup>32</sup>

Willpower workarounds such as this are not good enough. If executive branch organizations are not effective as they exist on paper, then they must be changed on paper, because only then will the executive branch achieve strategic success in our complicated and ever-changing world.

Taking the goals of Goldwater-Nichols as a model, Congress’s goals in passing an Interagency Goldwater-Nichols Act should be to:

- ❖ strengthen civilian authority over the Interagency
- ❖ improve the Interagency advice provided to senior civilian leadership
- ❖ increase attention to strategy formulation and contingency planning
- ❖ provide for more efficient use of Interagency resources
- ❖ improve Interagency personnel development and management
- ❖ enhance the general effectiveness of Interagency operations and improve management
- ❖ place clear responsibility on regional interagency directors for accomplishment of the missions assigned to their directorates
- ❖ ensure that regional interagency director authority is fully commensurate

with regional interagency director responsibility.

## The Executive Branch Organizational Imperative

The United States has incredible potential and opportunity to advance its interests and values around the world, and the American military instrument of power is extremely adept at rapid dominance on the battlefield. But that is far from enough. Instead, with consistent top-down direction, the executive branch should be producing dominant and persistent positive security effects both on the battlefield and off, from the efficient combination of every instrument of national power. In this regard, the executive branch fails miserably. Our early results in Iraq and Afghanistan are merely the most salient, recent colossal proof.

The executive branch must be transformed by statutory structural, operational, and human adjustments to produce coordinated and concerted efforts from every department and agency, in a synthesized approach guided by directive leadership provided from the top. Enabling that kind of leadership necessitates reinventing the Cabinet and inventing regional interagency directorates to allow the President’s senior leadership team to direct a true Interagency that deserves to be described as a proper noun.

The problem is not, as some have suggested in a rather simplistic way, that regional combatant commands have become obsolete and represent impediments to coherent policy,<sup>33</sup> but rather that the disparate perspectives and stovepiped organizational structures and authority throughout the executive branch make such coherency impossible.

The United States needs a more effective and more efficient executive branch of government not to dominate the world, but to continue to secure the lives and futures of its citizens. As we do so, our national interests will continue to feed freedom around the world, as they have done throughout our nation's history. If we fail to do so, that feeding will stop. Meeting this challenge requires not bigger government but integrated government. It requires an Interagency worthy of the name.

In his December 1, 2009, address at the United States Military Academy at West Point, President Obama stated, "As President, I refuse to set goals that go beyond our responsibility, our means, or our interests."<sup>34</sup> Reinventing executive branch structure, as described here, enhances U.S. Government means, to bring them in line with American responsibility and American interests.

The time for change is now. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2007), x. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I–3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV–1.

<sup>4</sup> Field Manual 3–0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2001), 2–16.

<sup>5</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," *The Oxford Book of American Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1914).

<sup>6</sup> Presidential Policy Directive 1 (Washington, DC: The White House, 2009), 4, available at <[www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/ppd/ppd-1.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/ppd/ppd-1.pdf)>.

<sup>7</sup> Homeland Security Policy Institute, *Policy & Research Forum on Presidential Study Directive–1: Organizing for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism* (Washington, DC: The George Washington University, May 27, 2009), video clip 3, at 15 minutes 12 seconds, available at <[www.gwumc.edu/hspi/events/psd1PRE.cfm](http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/events/psd1PRE.cfm)>.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "Super (Sub) Secretaries," February 28, 2009, available at <[www.nytimes.com/2009/03/01/opinion/01friedman.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/01/opinion/01friedman.html)>.

<sup>9</sup> Karen DeYoung, "Obama's NSC Will Get New Power: Directive Expands Makeup and Role of Security Body," February 8, 2009, available at <[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/07/AR2009020702076.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/07/AR2009020702076.html)>.

<sup>10</sup> The Project on National Security Reform, *Forging a New Shield* (Arlington, VA: The Project on National Security Reform, 2008), 469–470.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Defense (DOD), *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, version 1 (Washington, DC: DOD, September 11, 2007), B–5.

<sup>12</sup> Air Mobility Command, *Concept of Operations for Active Associate Units* (Scott Air Force Base, IL: Air Mobility Command, June 1, 2007), 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Department of State, *U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Handbook, Volume 2, Handbook 2—Post Management Organization* (Washington, DC: Department of State, November 29, 2005), 3.

<sup>15</sup> See the extract of the Clay Paper in U.S. Senate Subcommittee on National Security Staffing and Operations, *The Ambassador and the Problem of Coordination* (Washington, DC: U.S. Senate Historical Studies Division, September 13, 1963), 60–61.

<sup>16</sup> See the breakdown of typical agencies included on Country Teams in Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, “The ‘Country Team,’” *U.S. Diplomacy: An Online Exploration of Diplomatic History and Foreign Affairs* (Arlington, VA: Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 2009), available at <[www.usdiplomacy.org/state/abroad/countryteam.php](http://www.usdiplomacy.org/state/abroad/countryteam.php)>.

<sup>17</sup> Robert B. Oakley and Michael Casey, Jr., “The Country Team: Restructuring America’s First Line of Engagement,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 47 (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2007), 146.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–151.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 152. Emphasis added.

<sup>20</sup> Friedman.

<sup>21</sup> See Department of State, “Senior Officials,” available at <[www.state.gov/misc/19232.htm](http://www.state.gov/misc/19232.htm)>. The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs is incorrectly listed here as the *third*-ranking Department of State official, with reference to the time period before a second deputy secretary was added. See also Department of State, “Department Organization Chart (image map): May 2009,” available at <[www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99494.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99494.htm)>.

<sup>22</sup> Oakley and Casey, 152.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 153: “There should not be a permanent regional Ambassador.” Instead, Oakley argues that “it is critical that the State Department’s cadre of regional assistant secretaries enjoy good two-way communication with Defense’s five (soon to be six) regional combatant commanders, while taking steps, however, not to bypass their equivalents at the Joint Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.” Notwithstanding Oakley’s argument, the regional combatant commanders are themselves the closest current functional equivalents of the regional assistant secretaries, and looking at it any other way is counterproductive.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>25</sup> JP 1–02, 398.

<sup>26</sup> Office of the Press Secretary, “Statement by the President on the White House Organization for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism,” May 26, 2009, available at <[www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Statement-by-the-President-on-the-White-House-Organization-for-Homeland-Security-and-Counterterrorism/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Statement-by-the-President-on-the-White-House-Organization-for-Homeland-Security-and-Counterterrorism/)>.

<sup>27</sup> Ivo H. Daalder and I.M. Destler, “In the Shadow of the Oval Office: The Next National Security Adviser,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January 2009), 118.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 114–115.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Gibbings, Donald Hurley, and Scott Moore, “Interagency Operations Centers: An Opportunity We Can’t Ignore,” *Parameters* 28, no. 4 (Winter 1998–1999), 3, available at <[www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/98winter/moore.htm](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/98winter/moore.htm)>.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Edward Marks, “Rethinking the Geographic Combatant Commands,” *InterAgency Journal* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2010), 19–23.

<sup>34</sup> Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” December 1, 2009, available at <[www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan)>.