National Security Reform

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National security reform is more necessary now than ever, but some critics have exaggerated the costs and scope of the required changes. Actually, the system's most egregious limitations can be inexpensively fixed in three straightforward steps. These reforms would be politically and bureaucratically challenging and require knowledgeable and determined leadership, but they are not expensive, hopelessly complicated, or overly broad in scope or scale.

The national security system has grown substantially since World War II, but its ability to handle complex and dynamic problems has not changed much.[1] Therein lies the problem: As the security environment grows increasingly complex and dynamic, the current system remains unable to coordinate multiple elements of power and thus cannot contend with multidimensional threats or keep pace as they rapidly evolve. Consequently, the system performs increasingly poorly, and as a result, it is now commonplace for national security leaders to support national security reform. As Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO) observed in 2010, "For many years, we've repeatedly heard from independent blue-ribbon panels and bipartisan commissions that . . . our system is inefficient, ineffective, and often down-right broken."[2] Congressman Skelton was not exaggerating. One national-level blue-ribbon review after another has concluded the national security system needs reform,[3] and virtually all published assessments of the system by individual leaders and experts reach the same conclusion.[4]

The reasons national security reform has not yet taken place are surveyed elsewhere.[5] However, one key impediment to reform is the influential but false assumption that fixing the system would be too difficult and costly. In reality, Congress and the President could easily solve the primary problem bedeviling the system in three straightforward steps:

- pass legislation allowing the President to empower "mission managers" to lead intrinsically interagency missions

- make a concerted effort to create the collaborative attitudes and behaviors among Cabinet officials necessary for mission managers to succeed

- adopt a new model of a National Security Advisor with responsibility for system-wide performance.

These reforms would be politically and bureaucratically challenging but not expensive.

Mission Manager Authority

There is widespread agreement on the number-one problem plaguing the national security system: executive branch departments and agencies too often compete instead of collaborate, making it difficult if not impossible to achieve national security objectives. Few collective enterprises can succeed without unity of effort, and it is widely recognized that our national security system does a poor job in this regard. Many senior military and diplomatic leaders insist that our lack of success in Afghanistan and Iraq is best explained by just such an absence of unified effort (see figure). As these leaders argue, such complex, dynamic security problems are not managed well because no one other than the President has the authority to direct and integrate the efforts of departments and agencies, and he is too busy to do so. Orchestrating national security missions requires sustained attention, and Presidents simply do not have the time to manage even the most important security problems on a continuous basis. The President is the de jure commander in chief but a de facto "commander in brief."[6] As Ambassador Richard Holbrooke argued long ago, Presidents can usually decide on policy for high-priority matters, and "if it involves few enough agencies and few enough people . . . even carry it out," but "the number of issues that can be handled in this personalized way is very small."[7]

The President's all-encompassing span of control and limited time also explain why the current mechanisms to help the President generate unified effort are ineffective. The hierarchy of interagency committees that are supposed to coordinate policy and strategy and oversee their consistent implementation can only suggest, not direct, activities. In our system, "interagency committees, conveners, and lead agencies are basically organized ways of promoting voluntary cooperation"[8] and are thus

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Figure. What Really Went Wrong in Iraq and Afghanistan?

"The essential ingredient for victory is . . . a comprehensive strategy that draws together all the resources of the U.S. Government . . . [but] there are too many bureaucratic impediments," he says. It's too hard, in Abizaid's view, to balance elements that should be working together but are instead competing. . . . Abizaid . . . wants to join in a public debate about how to reform a national security system that hasn't worked well enough in Iraq."[1]

—General John Abizaid, USA (Ret.), 2007

"There is still no effective, consistent mechanism that brings a whole interagency team to focus on a particular foreign policy issue."

—Ambassador Ryan Crocker, 2009

"Executive authority below the President is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of contingency relief and reconstruction operations. The role of executive authority—and the lack thereof—over interagency coordination lies at the heart of the failures in the Iraq reconstruction program."[2]

—Stuart Bowen
Special Inspector General for Iraq, 2009

"The issue to date . . . is that below the President there is no one person, head of a department, or head of an agency who has been tasked with or is responsible for the strategic direction and integration of all elements of national power, so the United States can properly execute a strategy for Iraq. . . . Nobody has the authority and influence needed across the whole U.S. Government. . . . We need some new constructs."[3]

—General Richard Myers, USAF (Ret.)
Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2009

"I think that if we look at ourselves hard in the mirror, you can't do something as difficult as Afghanistan without one person in charge. And we still don't have that."[4]

—General Stanley A. McChrystal, USA (Ret.), 2015

"[We] know personally most of those involved in leading the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are to a person—whether military officers or civilian officials—diligent and dedicated patriots. . . . However, when officials and officers in the field did not get along, the deficiencies of the system allowed their disputes to bring in-country progress to a halt. What is needed is an overall system that will make cooperation and integration the norm, not the exception."[5]

—Admiral Dennis Blair, USN (Ret.), Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann, and Admiral Eric Olson, USN (Ret.), 2014

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[1] David Ignatius, "Abizaid's Long View," *Washington Post*, March 16, 2007.

[2] *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009), 14.

[3] Richard B. Myers with Malcolm McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon: Serving on the Front Lines of National Security* (New York: Threshold, 2009).

[4] Stanley A. McChrystal, interview by Joseph J. Collins and Frank G. Hoffman, April 2, 2015.

[5] Dennis Blair, Ronald Neumann, and Eric Olson, "Fixing Fragile States," *National Interest*, August 27, 2014.

often ineffective if not a waste of time.[9] The interagency groups either come to a stalemate over differences or, as former Secretary of State Dean Acheson argued, reach "agreement by exhaustion" while "plastering over" differences.[10] Lead agency and other approaches to coordination also have proved ineffective.[11]

Seeing the need for better unified effort, Congress has passed laws that assign a designated individual responsibility for coordinating an issue area. Yet Congress never really empowers these individuals. Statutes designating coordinators for countering narcotics, countering weapons of mass destruction, and managing foreign relations all include limits and loopholes that invite departments and agencies to ignore or bypass the integrating official.[12] Many worry that fully empowering Presidential

subordinates to produce unified effort across the executive branch would confuse lines of authority from the President down through his Cabinet officials to their field activities. Yet all organizations with functional structures like the U.S. national security system have to balance the need for a clear line of authority down through functional capabilities with the need to integrate those capabilities to accomplish cross-cutting objectives. Where this balancing act takes place depends on the extent to which the organization is centralized. The range of problems that the organization must manage and how quickly it evolves should determine the optimal degree of centralization. Less centralization and more cross-cutting integration is needed to operate effectively in a complex and dynamic environment. But in the current system, deference to those in charge of functional capabilities routinely trumps the prerogatives of anyone charged with coordinating multifunctional missions, forcing issues upward for more centralized control by the President. The President needs to reverse this flow and delegate the executive authority for integrating the efforts of departments and agencies to a subordinate of his or her choice: a person sometimes referred to as a "mission manager."[13]

It may seem surprising that the President, empowered by the Constitution to act as Chief Executive, cannot currently delegate his authority for integrating the work of departments and agencies. However, the stipulated authorities of the Cabinet officials have increased and been consolidated in law over the past 60 years. The 1947 National Security Act and its subsequent amendments, including the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, greatly strengthened the authority of the Secretary of Defense. The 1977 Department of Energy Organization Act created the Department of Energy and rolled up several agencies' responsibilities into that new organization, empowering the Secretary of Energy. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 combined 22 separate organizations into the Department of Homeland Security, empowering another new Cabinet official. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and empowered the director to oversee and manage the Intelligence Community.

The numerous codified authorities of Cabinet officials often provide a legal basis for ignoring "czars" charged by the President with overseeing a cross-cutting mission area. An example is the chain of command for military operations. Goldwater-Nichols specified that it runs "from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the commander of a Combatant Command."[14] The Department of Defense (DOD) used this provision to claim control of postwar planning for Iraq and ignore other departments. DOD argued that military forces

would be involved and that the chain of command to those forces went through the Secretary of Defense, and thus DOD should be in charge of the entire interagency effort.[15]

Actually, Goldwater-Nichols gives the President other options because it includes the caveat "unless otherwise directed by the President."[16] However, for the President to insert anyone else in the military chain of command, or delegate decision authority over other departments and agency activities, other legal requirements must be met:

> *The President may, pursuant to 3 U.S.C. § 301, delegate particular functions to "the head of any department or agency in the executive branch, or any official thereof" who is subject to Senate confirmation. To qualify as a delegable function, a function must be "vested in the President by law" or vested in another officer who performs the function "subject to the approval, ratification, or other action of the President." [Furthermore,] "Any individual in the interagency space who exercises meaningful authority to compel departments to act" would have to be an "officer of the United States," and officers of the United States must have their positions established by statute as required by the Appointments Clause of the Constitution.[17]*

Czars informally tapped by the President to coordinate an issue area do not meet these requirements. Thus we need new legislation for this purpose. It should empower the President to appoint and empower mission managers to lead cross-functional teams irrespective of pre-existing statutes. Only then could the President effectively delegate his authority for directing the efforts of the executive branch in a particular mission area involving capabilities "owned" by multiple Cabinet officials. Something like the following language suggests what is needed:

> *The President may designate individuals, subject to Senate confirmation, to lead interagency teams to manage clearly defined missions with responsibility for and presumptive authority to direct and coordinate the activities and operations of all of U.S. Government organizations in so far as their support is required to ensure the successful implementation of a Presidentially approved strategy for accomplishing the mission. The designated individual's presumptive authority will not extend beyond the requirements for successful strategy implementation, and department and*

> *agency heads may appeal any of the designated individu-*
> *al's decisions to the President if they believe there is a com-*
> *pelling case that executing the decision would contravene*
> *public law or do grave harm to other missions of national*
> *importance.*[18]

Another reason for codifying the authorities in statute is the need to secure resources for the President's mission manager:

> *"The President may create structures and processes and*
> *fund them temporarily by transferring resources, but ulti-*
> *mately it is Congress that provides resources on a sustained*
> *basis. Without Congress's input and resources, a presiden-*
> *tially imposed solution to interagency integration may*
> *wither for lack of funding." Thus, the statute . . . would*
> *likely also require a mechanism for funding their activities*
> *and associated congressional oversight.*[19]

Resource requirements vary greatly by mission. Countering disinformation may require nothing more than a compelling forensic case to discredit disinformation, whereas arming and training foreign forces require funds to purchase weapons and training. Whatever the resources required, ultimately Congress provides them to the executive branch, and a mission manager would need to keep Congress apprised of his or her activities. Given the authorities invested in each mission manager, Congress would want these officials to be subject to Senate confirmation.

Collaborative Cabinet

Legislation allowing the President to empower selected subordinates to direct executive branch activities is the key prerequisite for successful national security reform.[20] However, it is not sufficient. Structural adjustments in authorities must be accompanied by less visible but equally important elements of organizational performance.[21] When senior leaders in the private sector impose hasty reforms without sufficient support and follow-up, the usual result is failure. A President imposing mission managers on his Cabinet officials and National Security Council (NSC) staff without supporting measures would also fail.[22] To succeed, the President will have to personally lead a concerted effort to shape leadership attitudes and behavior, staff skills, and the organizational culture of the NSC staff.

The place to begin is Cabinet officials and their expectations. The President would have to explain the need to use mission managers rather than the traditional interagency committees for high-priority, intrinsically interagency missions. Leaders of functional departments who want to protect their turf and fear losing control of their own operations and agendas are the greatest threat to the success of such cross-functional teams.[23] A case in point is U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). One commander of USNORTHCOM established cross-directorate Focus Area Synchronization Teams to improve overall organizational effectiveness and collaboration on key mission areas in 2010, and they produced good results. The teams also irritated the leaders of USNORTHCOM's functional staff directorates, who convinced a new incoming commander to dismantle them.[24] The same thing apparently happened to similar efforts to reform Marine Corps headquarters.[25] Functional leaders argue cross-cutting teams lack sufficient expertise, confuse lines of authority, and are inefficient. If they sense the senior leader (in this case the President) is not fully committed, they typically exert control over their representatives on teams by reminding them pointedly to "remember who you work for." Under this kind of pressure, team members stalemate over the way forward or compromise to the point of incomprehension. The group becomes a committee whose members protect their parent organizations' equities rather than a team focused on accomplishing the mission. In such cases the poor results seem to justify the observation that the team is just another layer of useless bureaucracy.

When teams are allowed to perform, their results demonstrate their worth and, over time, resistance fades. However, resistance from functional departments often cripples the teams before they can demonstrate their potential.[26] Despite everyone's interest in serving the Nation and safeguarding its security, similar issues will arise when a President decides to use mission managers leading interagency teams. To ensure mission managers have a chance to succeed, the President would have to personally communicate support for them and allay the concerns of Cabinet officials. The President should make the following points to his Cabinet:

- Mission managers are necessary. An abundance of historical cases illustrates the inadequacy of our existing mechanisms. As experience also teaches, our mechanism for managing complex problems must mirror the complexity of the security problem it tackles.[27] It must be a truly multifunctional, interagency team empowered to formulate, consider, and pursue fully integrated approaches. As President, I need to hear more than competing military, diplomat-

ic, and intelligence perspectives. I need alternative but fully integrated interagency approaches. Past examples of such teams clearly demonstrate they perform with much greater proficiency than czars or lead agencies.[28]

- Mission managers will not dilute your authority. If we have learned anything since 9/11, and arguably since World War II, it is that no one Cabinet official can direct another Cabinet official to do anything.[29] Thus, none of you, no matter how talented, dedicated, or insightful on a particular issue, can lead and control an integrated, interagency approach to solving inherently interagency problems. Because you do not currently have this authority, you are not losing it to mission managers when we empower them to lead a well-defined mission. If the problem is largely a diplomatic, military, or intelligence problem, it will be managed by the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, or Director of National Intelligence, respectively. When we assign an interagency problem to a mission manager, it is because none of you are in a position to manage the problem well yourselves.

- Mission managers will manage the problem "end to end." The mission manager will assess the evolution of his or her mission; develop policy; propose and execute a strategy for dealing with the issue; conduct or oversee all requisite planning for associated operations; oversee implementation of policy, strategy, and plans; and evaluate progress, solving problems as they arise and adjusting as necessary. When mission managers discover an impediment to progress, I expect them to intervene selectively but decisively to ensure mission success. They will drill down to whatever level of detail is necessary to identify the origin of suboptimal performance and remove it, and I will encourage their doing so within the bounds of the procedures outlined below.

- Mission managers may impact your equities. If this occurs, you have two remedies: one advantage of mission managers is that they are singularly focused on and held accountable for outcomes. The disadvantage is that their mission focus inclines them to ignore other legitimate concerns. They may take actions that complicate other national security objectives or that complicate your ability to manage your departments and agencies to best effect. We will prevent that from happening in two ways.

- The first way is through *strategy concurrence*. After being assigned a mission, the mission manager will conduct a review of the situation and, after due deliberation with his or her team, propose strategy alternatives with associated resource implications. We will meet and agree upon the best strategy. Any concerns of yours will be noted and addressed at that time. My staff will codify our decisions in a directive that clarifies the mission manager's mission, strategy, authorities, and resources. The mission manager's authority will only extend to the parameters of the assigned mission, consistent with the strategy we discuss and I approve. If the strategy requires amendment, we will meet to consider its revision. However, once we agree upon these elements, I expect you to support the mission manager.

- The second way is through *implementation objections*. When we select mission managers and issue them mission directives, we will choose highly competent senior leaders who understand the importance of treating your institutions with respect. However, if they transgress the bounds of their mission directive or inadvertently make decisions with dire consequences for the welfare of your department or agency, I expect you to raise the issue. We will then quickly meet to adjudicate the competing objectives, risks, and anticipated benefits. I expect you to raise principled rather than bureaucratic concerns. I will not protect perceived prerogatives or respond to exaggerated allegations of harm to your organizations or the national interest that are clearly less important than the mission we are trying to execute. This right of appeal has worked well elsewhere.[30]

- Mission managers must succeed. The missions assigned to mission managers are critical for the security of the Nation. They cannot be allowed to fail for lack of support. The presumption is that the mission manager is empowered by me to manage the problem and direct executive branch activities as they best see fit. The NSC staff will ensure the mission manager and team have the resources they need to succeed, including office space, communications, administrative support, and team members committed for specific periods of duration. The mission manager will decide what expertise the team needs, and I expect you to make that kind of expertise available. I expect those members to be rewarded if the team succeeds, and above all, I expect your subordinates to avoid the temptation to control members of the mission team. If the mission manager concludes a team member is simply representing his or her parent

organization's interests rather than trying their best to accomplish the mission, that person will be dismissed. If members of your organization are repeatedly dismissed for lack of collaboration, I will conclude that you personally do not support these priority national security efforts.

The President could go on to underscore some major advantages to doing business this way. In contrast to a Deputies Committee, which meets periodically and must examine a host of security problems, mission managers and their teams would be able to pursue their issue full time, enabling them to better keep abreast of developments. Because they are empowered they could manage problems end to end. Rather than simply promulgating broad and often obscure policy and hoping for the best as departments and agencies implement it, mission manager–led teams would be able to quickly zero in on any impediment to their success wherever it occurs. Because teams are not hamstrung by the need for political consensus, and their authority is commensurate with their responsibilities, they could make clear choices and take decisive action.

Another advantage is that this approach would make the best use of the President's time. Currently, Presidents are often asked to review briefings from departments and agencies intended to keep them informed and comfortable with general policy and progress on a range of issues, but seldom are these meetings structured to ensure that the really contentious issues are highlighted for Presidential attention. In fact, such issues are often downplayed to avoid confrontation. Using mission managers, a President could be confident that the full, integrated capabilities of the U.S. Government are being used to solve high-priority problems consistent with an approved strategy and that any major problems hampering the effort would be brought to the President's attention. Department heads would not embarrass themselves by raising marginal concerns, so only the most consequential issues would arise for Presidential decision, which are precisely the kind of hard decisions only the President has the power to make. An example from recent history was the Pentagon's concern that surging forces in Iraq in 2007 ran the risk of breaking the Army and elevating the risk of war in other theaters where enemies might seek to take advantage of overextended U.S. ground forces. These were legitimate concerns that the President needed to hear and rule on, which he did.[31]

Best of all, mission managers would be accountable. A President cannot currently hold anyone accountable for failure to manage complex security threats because no one other than the President has the authority

to orchestrate the multiple lines of effort they require. In this respect the President faces precisely the same dilemma that the chairman and chief executive officer of Xerox was dealing with when the chairman observed:

> *We see attractive markets, and we have superior technology. On the other hand, we won't be able to take advantage of this situation unless we can overcome cumbersome, functionally driven bureaucracy. . . . we were functional in nature. So every function . . . all came up the line and, in the end, reported to me. . . . I was the only one responsible for anything in its entirety. If a product . . . did not [meet] success, there was no clear way to see what went wrong. Finger-pointing and shifting the blame were inevitable. The only one responsible for the failure of that product, therefore, was me.*[32]

Xerox solved its accountability problem by empowering cross-functional teams, and the President will have to do the same if he wants anyone empowered and thus accountable for dealing with similar cross-functional problems in the national security environment.

Many senior leaders like the idea of a cross-cutting team but believe it should simply advise the President rather than exercising executive authority. This would sidetrack the team's success and must be avoided at all costs. One reason such teams succeed is their ability to focus full-time on managing the cross-cutting mission. They make numerous small decisions that move the effort forward and communicate constantly. If they are merely advisory and can take no action without appealing to the President, much of this energy is vitiated and the President will inevitably be called upon to rule on innumerable lesser disputes, which negates the value of the mission manager from the President's point of view. Also, if the teams are not empowered they will not behave as if they are responsible for outcomes. Instead they will concentrate on providing "good advice." Instead of being singularly focused on accomplishing their mission, they will worry about what sounds reasonable; what Cabinet officials and the majority of informed observers will support; or what they know of the President's inclinations. Finally, department heads would take the "advisory" designation as clear evidence the President is not serious about empowering the group. Accordingly, they would protect their institution's narrow equities and support efforts by others to do the same.

New Model of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

The third change necessary is a new model of National Security Advisor.[33] The current model emphasizes the National Security Advisor as an honest broker, ensuring the decisionmaking process fairly represents the positions of the different departments and agencies on any given issue, resolving conflicts and elevating the most important disagreements to the President for resolution. The honest broker role is often contrasted with powerful National Security Advisors such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who unabashedly advocated policies and tried to engineer their implementation.

In reality, all National Security Advisors must balance their roles as process managers and confidential advisors to the President. As process managers, they must be trusted by Cabinet officials to articulate their department's views fairly. For this reason, high-level interagency committees have competing department and agency positions to contend with, not integrated strategy choices for the President's consideration. If advisors and their staffs took input from the departments and agencies and redefined it into a set of integrated alternatives, they would be accused of trying to direct outcomes. Similarly, if National Security Advisors or NSC staff are too creative in summarizing the results of discussion at meetings (as they are on occasion), they again risk alienating the Cabinet officials. In such circumstances, the departments and agencies can be expected to resist the National Security Advisor during policy implementation.

On the other hand, in their role as policy advisor, National Security Advisors must retain the confidence of the President by providing insightful advice and orchestrating positive outcomes. There are so many interdepartmental disagreements that the President cannot possibly resolve them all, and the differences often reflect bureaucratic equities rather than honest differences over alternative courses of action, which is what the President needs and wants. If all the National Security Advisor does is summarize department positions, he or she will be a disappointment to the President. For this reason, advisors work hard to forge consensus and integrate alternatives, sometimes at the expense of accurately replicating department and agency positions, which causes friction with Cabinet officials.

With the reforms recommended here, much of the tension between the two advisor roles would disappear. Mission managers would integrate alternative courses of action for consideration by the President and NSC and implement the approved strategy. It would be the National Security Advisor's job to run the process and ensure that the President hears any appeals from Cabinet officials to curb or overturn a mission manager's decision. For this purpose, the National Security Advisor could truly be

an honest broker, ensuring that the mission manager, who is working the issue full-time, and the Cabinet officials and their concerns are honestly summarized for the President.

However, the new model of National Security Advisor also would have system-wide duties and a system-wide perspective. The advisor would have to ensure mission managers are set up for success and assess and keep track of their progress. Finally, with the help of the NSC staff, they would have to identify areas where mission managers are in conflict with one another. All this would require a system-wide perspective. Instead of concentrating on a handful of top Presidential priorities, the new National Security Advisor would be responsible for ensuring the system as a whole was working well and addressing the full range of critical issues.

This new model of National Security Advisor is much more practical. Currently our expectations of National Security Advisors are altogether unrealistic. We want them to be master administrators who advance the multilayered interagency committee process in a timely, transparent, and comprehensive fashion. But we also want them to be foreign policy and national security maestros who combine a comprehensive appreciation of the international system and security environment with a wide range of subject matter expertise across an incredible array of multifarious, complex problems that enables them to discreetly offer sagacious advice when circumstances, or the President, demand it. Furthermore, we insist that advisors have an exceptionally close and well-recognized personal relationship with the President, essentially serving as the President's alter ego on national security.

National Security Advisors are criticized for not meeting these naive expectations.[34] National Security Advisor General James Jones, USMC (Ret.), is a case in point. He was relentlessly attacked as inadequate despite a successful career as a Service chief and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Supreme Allied Commander Europe. Leaks to the press complained that he did not work himself into a state of utter exhaustion. He was accused of being "too measured and low-key to keep pace with the hard chargers working late hours in the West Wing"[35] and of falling behind "a White House on a manic dash to get a lot of top-tier issues dealt with."[36] He was resented for biking at lunchtime, leaving after a 12-hour day instead of working late into the night,[37] for missing key meetings and, at the same time, not being by the President's side all day long.[38]

Jones was also criticized for managing collaboration rather than ensuring his voice dominated debate on key issues. People complained about Jones for "speaking up less in debates than [Secretary of State Hillary] Clinton and not pushing as hard for decisions."[39] He was not

seen as a dominant national security figure, but rather as self-effacing, collaborative, and generous in meetings.[40] He even sent others who were substantively competent to meetings in his stead. One pundit observed, "This kind of NSC collaboration always sounds good in principle [but] when sharp disagreements arise . . . the self-effacing retired general may have to summon his inner Henry Kissinger."[41] Even his admirers agreed that "he needs to drive the agenda."[42]

Finally, Jones was criticized as insufficiently close to the President. The lack of a close, personal relationship with the President meant Jones would not be taken seriously by other senior officials. One critic insisted, "He has to be first among equals—the fact that Condi [Rice] couldn't control [Richard] Cheney and [Donald] Rumsfeld in [George W.] Bush's first term was disastrous. A lot depends on what sort of relationship develops between Jones and [Barack] Obama."[43] Another expert worried, "The National Security Advisor needs to be behind the president," both literally and figuratively, but General Jones is not "seen as the guy in the room."[44] Pundits carped that other Presidential advisors had closer personal relationships with President Obama, which put Jones at a major bureaucratic disadvantage.

Critics were looking for an indefatigable subject matter genius and bureaucratic warrior with close personal ties to the President to run the national security system because that is just the kind of heroic individual it would take to make our current system work minimally well. In a system where only the President has the authority to compel collaboration, critics wanted Jones to be an extension of the President and his power. In a system where failures quickly gravitate to the White House for centralized management, critics wanted Jones to be knowledgeable enough to control the debate on all national security topics that came his way. This kind of empowered subject matter maestro might improve cross-departmental collaboration for a few issues, but the vast majority will necessarily go unattended. This explains the criticism that Jones was not working frantically enough. Without working around the clock (and in the process exhausting intellectual capital rather than building it), even fewer critical issues can be addressed.

The omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent National Security Advisor does not exist and never has, and we should stop expecting one to materialize. Instead we need someone who promotes collaborative decisionmaking and less-centralized issue management and who understands the importance of running the overall national security system well. Jones's admirers considered him a genius on management structures and decisionmaking processes,[45] and in a reformed system such as the one advocated here, his approach would work admirably. If the

President had the authority to designate mission managers, and a collaborative Cabinet that understood and supported their use, a National Security Advisor with Jones's measured pace, attention to system-wide performance, and collaborative bearing would serve the Nation and the President well.

Conclusion

The 9/11 Commission's report did a good job of identifying the major limitations of the current national security system. It argued that "the agencies are like a set of specialists in a hospital, each ordering tests, looking for symptoms, and prescribing medications. What is missing is the attending physician who makes sure they work as a team."[46] The report explained this deficiency could not be rectified without adjusting the authorities of Cabinet officials. However, the report did not recommend circumscribing the authorities of Cabinet officials. Instead, the commission, which only adopted recommendations with unanimous support, advised in favor of creating the National Counterterrorism Center, a new organization that would conduct planning but not make policy or direct operations. As the Project on National Security Reform noted, this recommendation was clearly inadequate to solve the problem the commission identified:

> Using the commission's analogy of the different departments and agencies acting like a set of specialists in a hospital without an attending physician, we can say the commission settled for a specialist who could offer a second opinion without providing the attending physician who directs the operations. Not surprisingly, to date the departments and agencies have treated the National Counterterrorism Center as a source for second opinions. The reality is that all priority national security missions—not just counterterrorism—require an attending physician.[47]

The recommendations in this chapter correct the shortcoming that the 9/11 Commission identified but ignored. We do not need large, expensive, new organizations and complex processes. We need legislation from Congress, a President with a strong desire to improve national security system performance, and a National Security Advisor with a collaborative bent and organizational and bureaucratic acumen. Once in place, the mission managers would prove effective and their use would proliferate, which would require some additional follow-on reforms.

Once mission managers demonstrate they can produce better outcomes, additional reforms to help the system better support their use could be implemented. The critical thing now—if we want a system capable of significantly better performance—is to focus on these three indispensable steps forward.

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Notes

[1] Douglas Stuart, "Constructing the Iron Cage: The 1947 National Security Act," in *Affairs of the State: The Interagency and National Security*, ed. Gabriel Marcella (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 53. See also *Forging a New Shield* (Washington, DC: Project on National Security Reform, November 2008).

[2] Ike Skelton, comments to the press, September 30, 2010, available at <http://armed-services.house.gov/pdfs/HR6249/SkeltonStatement.pdf>.

[3] Christopher J. Lamb and Joseph C. Bond, *National Security Reform and the 2016 Election*, INSS Strategic Forum 293 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, April 2016).

[4] A survey of over 250 books, articles, and studies on interagency cooperation in the U.S. Government found only one report that concluded that interagency cooperation is successful. See Christopher J. Lamb et al., "National Security Reform and the Security Environment," in *Global Strategic Assessment 2009: America's Security Role in a Changing World*, ed. Patrick M. Cronin (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2009), 412–413. See also Lamb and Bond.

[5] Lamb and Bond.

[6] Christopher J. Lamb and Edward Marks, *Chief of Mission Authority as a Model for National Security Integration*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 2 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, December 2010).

[7] Richard Holbrooke, "The Machine That Fails," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1, 1971, available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/12/14/the-machine-that-fails/>.

[8] Harold Seidman, *Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 219, 224.

[9] Lamb and Bond, 2. The ineffectiveness of interagency committees was well explained in Henry Jackson, *Organizing for National Security: Inquiry of the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, Senator Henry M. Jackson, Chairman, for the Committee on Government Operations, United States Senate,* 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961).

[10] Cited in *Forging a New Shield*, 260.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Lamb and Marks.

[13] The term *mission manager* has gained some currency, and so it is used here. But as some reviewers have noted, *mission director* would be a more appropriate title given the authorities recommended for the position.

[14] Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 162(b), available at <www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/162>.

[15] Douglas J. Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: Harper, 2008), 316.

[16] Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 162(b).

[17] Lamb and Marks, 20.

[18] Ibid., 18.

[19] Ibid., 20ff. For an extended argument on this topic see Gordon Lederman, "National Security Reform for the Twenty-first Century: A New National Security Act and Reflections on Legislation's Role in Organizational Change," *Journal of National Security Law and Policy* 3, no. 2 (February 2010).

[20] Project for National Security Reform argued such legislation would need to be accompanied by new Select Committees on National Security in the Senate and House of Representatives with jurisdiction over all interagency operations and activities.

[21] James R. Locher III, statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, "30 Years of Goldwater-Nichols Reform," November 10, 2015. Frank Ostroff makes the same point in *The Horizontal Organization: What the Organization of the Future Looks Like and How It Delivers Value to Customers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12.

[22] Ostroff, 12–13. Ostroff argues that employing cross-functional teams "without any sense of how to ensure that the teams are working in an integrated way that advances the performance of the entire entity, is nothing short of irresponsible."

[23] Ibid., 178.

[24] Author conversations with a staff officer from U.S. Northern Command about his strategy research project at the Army War College.

[25] Conversation with a senior official in a Washington, DC–based think tank that conducted an after-action report on the failed reforms for the U.S. Marine Corps.

[26] As Ostroff states, "Performance trumps ideology," and he provides much evidence from both the private and public sectors. Ostroff, 159.

[27] This is consistent with the organizational principle of "requisite variety." "If a business unit or team is to be successful in dealing with the challenges of a complex task, it is vital that it be allowed to possess sufficient internal complexity." See Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), 113.

[28] There are several in-depth case studies of high-performing interagency national security teams. See Christopher J. Lamb and Evan Munsing, *Secret Weapon: High-Value Target Teams as an Organizational Innovation*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 4 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, March 2011); Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 5 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, June 2011); Fletcher Schoen and Christopher J. Lamb, *Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 11 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, May 2012); and Christopher J. Lamb with Sarah Arkin and Sally Scudder, *The Bosnian Train and Equip Program: A Lesson in Interagency Integration of Hard and Soft Power*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 15 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, March 2014).

[29] Numerous examples of this point are offered in *Forging a New Shield* and its 107 supporting case studies. *Forging a New Shield*, 160.

[30] The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 has such a right of appeal in Section 151, d, 1.

[31] Frank G. Hoffman and G. Alexander Crowther, "Strategic Assessment and Adaptation: The Surges in Iraq and Afghanistan," in *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War*, ed. Richard D. Hooker, Jr., and Joseph J. Collins (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2015).

[32] Quoted in Ostroff, 131, 188.

[33] For simplicity's sake we will refer to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs as the National Security Advisor.

[34] See the discussion of complaints leveled against Condoleezza Rice in Christopher J. Lamb with Megan Franco, "National-Level Coordination and Implementation," in *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War*, 188, 198ff, 212ff.

[35] Karen DeYoung, "National Security Adviser Jones Says He's an 'Outsider' in Frenetic White House," *Washington Post*, May 7, 2009.

[36] Steve Clemons, "Can James Jones Survive a Second Round of Attacks and 'Longer Knives'? *The Washington Note*, June 12, 2009.

[37] Helene Cooper, "Obama to Speak from Egypt in Address to Muslim World," *New York Times*, May 8, 2009.

[38] Ben Smith and Jonathan Martin, "Reporters Jonesin' for NSC Profiles," *Politico*, May 8, 2009.

[39] Mark Landler, "Her Rival Now Her Boss, Clinton Settles into New Role," *New York Times*, May 1, 2009.

[40] Joe Klein, "Sizing Up Obama's First 100 Days," *Time*, April 23, 2009.

[41] David Ignatius, "General James Jones's Outlook as Barack Obama's National Security Adviser," *Washington Post*, April 30, 2009.

[42] Klein.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Cooper.

[45] Clemons.

[46] 9/11 Commission Report. Interestingly, McChrystal uses the same analogy in his recent book on teams. Stanley A. McChrystal, Tantum Collins, and David Silverman, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World* (New York: Portfolio, 2015), 101–103.

[47] *Forging a New Shield.*