Patterns of Convergence:
Toward Building Better Interoperability Between Diplomacy and Defense

FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE SUBMISSION TO

JOINT FORCES QUARTERLY

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"At last our enemies, with parallel stupidity, resolved our dilemmas, clarified our doubts and uncertainties, and unified our people for the long, hard course that the national interest required. Those of us who had been holding our breath while the future of the world hung in the balance could breathe once more… Our immediate task was clear; what should be our longer-range political aims and purposes, what were our major difficulties and dangers, remained shrouded in obscurity."[1]
-- Secretary of State, Dean Acheson

"Shrouded in Obscurity." Secretary Acheson's quiet observation about the United States' diplomatic aims and the political landscape following the imminent end of the Second World War, hangs like a long shadow over the Potomac River connecting Foggy Bottom to the Pentagon. Clausewitz clearly states, "The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose."[2] This simple adage, describing the political connective tissue between the Department of State and the Department of Defense, presents one of the true challenges for the United States' prosecution of global diplomacy. The problem then becomes one of creating, growing, and maturing the human capital required for these organizations to better link goals with means. Currently, no career model for either the Department of State or Defense exists that deliberately develops leaders to function at the strategic level and serve in the role of intra-departmental integrator.

This paper examines the disparate leader development systems which produce senior leaders for the Department of State and Department of Defense. More critically, how systemic patterns in the two systems often fail to achieve unity of effort for the whole of government in terms of foreign policy at the outset of conflicts, but ultimately

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[1] Acheson, Dean. *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 37.
[2] Clausewitz, Carl Von. Von Krieg (On War). Ed and trans by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1993), 99

tend toward success once the political aims and military means become aligned. Where the patterns of the system converge, there is success. Where they diverge, we note the two departments ultimately must work harder to overcome friction and, possibly, dysfunction.

Sometimes characterized as being "as alien as life forms from two competing planets, [the Departments of State and Defense] are polar opposites in character, in approach…and in worldview."[3] Through this simple comparison by Rife, highlighted through an apt metaphor, the stark patterns of divergence and convergence between State and Defense systems emerge into a nascent understanding of the interaction. An examination of the two agencies' organizational cultures, education and training, and organizational structures reveal the similarities and differences between these partners in support of the national interests. Leaders in the diplomacy and defense enterprises operate best when military objectives harmonize with diplomatic ends.

Overview and Guiding Questions

This paper will delve a bit deeper into the worlds of the Departments of Defense and State to better understand the organizational cultures of both and tease out the areas of commonality. Specifically, we will look at senior leader development – how do the Departments manage leaders to give them the requisite breadth and depth of experience and knowledge required to effectively function and participate in the strategic realm? Likewise, how do developmental timelines and education support interoperability with

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[3] Rife, Ricky L., *Defense Is From Mars State Is From Venus- Improving Communications and Promoting National Security.* (U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA: Army War College, 1998), 3

other government agencies? In this vein, and with respect to Department of Defense, the 2010 HASC Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation concluded that "Joint and Service efforts to cultivate military strategists are disassociated and producing mixed results."[4] This same statement could apply to the Department of State (who have no formal educational development system) implying there is a need to create a unified developmental effort in the two organizations to achieve unity of effort in strategy development and production.

In the late 2015 SASC hearings on the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, former Assistant Secretary of Defense Michele Flournoy argued for increased attention on the development of strategists and agile decision makers and highlighted problems within the Defense Department's strategy and planning processes. Inherently, these problems create dysfunction in how the civilian and military leaders comprehend each other's professional roles that are essential to developing strategy.[5] One could posit from this statement that the dysfunction found in the government's largest, and arguably most capable, department often leads to greater dysfunction in developing broader national strategy with smaller departments such as State.

From this point, patterns in these areas between the Departments of State and Defense and find our common ground to operate and crossing points to bridge the gaps are explained: Cultural; Educational and Training; and Organizational. Additionally, we

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[4] U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel, report prepared by Lorry M. Fenner, PhD. and Lee F. Howard III, 111th Cong., April 2010, Committee Print 111-4, xiii

[5] Flournoy, Michèle A. "Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee: The Urgent Need for Defense Reform." Center for a New American Security December 8, 2015. Online www.cnas.org last accessed 23 May 2016

will present two examples to highlight past success and failures between the departments in the spin-up to war and the natural transitions that follow in war.

Cultural Patterns

To begin with a basic truth, the members of our government in both Departments of State and Defense remain dedicated and patriotic defenders of the United States and her national interests. Here we see the first glimpse of how the two departments converge. Because our nation requires not only interagency cooperation but also interagency excellence, identifying the attributes of each Department's organizational culture allows us to better navigate the differences and find links between them.

"The practices, principles, policies and values of an organization form its culture. The culture of an organization decides the way employees behave amongst themselves as well as the people outside the organization."[6] The *Management Study Guide* describes nine types of organizational culture: Normative, Pragmatic, Academy, Baseball team, Club, Fortress, Tough Guy, Bet your company, and Process and offers that every organization has its own culture. The Department of State with its "culture of status quo,"[7] admiration and encouragement of individual achievement, ad hoc nature of planning, operating and meeting/briefing, and a method of valuing on-the-job/experience-based learning, indicates it follows a solid Club culture.

> *Organizations following a club culture are very particular about the employees they recruit. The individuals are hired as per their specialization, educational qualification and interests. Each one does what he is best at. The high potential*

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[6] MSG Team. *Management Study Guide.* n.d. http://managementstudyguide.com/types-of-organization-culture.htm last accessed May 12, 2016.

[7] Monroe, David. *Department of State - Why It Must Develop Operational Capacity,* Joint Military Operations, Naval War College (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 2008), 3

employees are promoted suitably and appraisals are a regular feature of such a culture. [8]

Defense, on the other hand, tends to follow a "Normative Culture." Normative Cultures depend on and demand teamwork, ordered and structured planning, doctrine and standards, and often strive for uniformity and unity of purpose. In Normative Cultures "[t]he norms and procedures of the organization are predefined and the rules and regulations are set as per the existing guidelines. The employees behave in an ideal way and strictly adhere to the policies of the organization. No employee dares to break the rules and sticks to the already laid policies."[9]

Seemingly insurmountable cultural differences exist between these two agencies, but their dedication to foreign policy and their oft-hazardous duties/ duty locations along with their common requirements to build partner capacity and to provide security, stabilization, transition and reconstruction, in support of our national security requires a close relationship that bridges the differences.

Education and Training Patterns

Similar to Organizational Culture, other converging and diverging attributes exist between State and Defense, especially in education and training. Both State and Defense hire educated members. State's initial hiring process for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) is one of the most comprehensive processes in the United States Government. Most applicants have advanced degrees from highly reputable universities and undergo a rigorous application and interview process. Likewise, Defense scrutinizes its

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[8] MSG
[9] MSG

Commissioned Officer applicants through a lengthy and voluminous application and selection process and requires each to attain a Bachelor's degree. Members receive their commission through one of three Service commissioning sources: Service academies, Officers' Candidate /Training School, or Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

Here the convergence of Education and Training between State and Defense ends. While State hires highly educated FSO's, it also "treats education as a pre-requisite for hiring, not a continuing requirement to prepare personnel for subsequent responsibilities."[10] In fact, some have noted, "Until Secretary Powell mandated leadership training, literally nothing except the introductory course… and language training (for FSO's) were required."[11] This stands in stark contrast to Defense's support for and foundational belief in continuous learning for its members.

Whereas the Department of State hires the educated and offers little training post-hire, after basic officer training, Defense's Services send their officers to further training for their branch or technical specialty (i.e. cavalry, flight training, specialty training) and then continue to train and formally educate their officers throughout their careers (most acquiring graduate and even post-graduate degrees, many through formal military channels). This commitment to training and education ensures officers have the skills, knowledge and attributes required or demanded of them at every stage and step in their careers. This also ensures that upon entry into each position, the officer is "locked and loaded" and ready to perform, minimizing "spin-up" time and maximizing operations.

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[10] Schake, Kori N. *State of Disrepair: Fixing the Culture and Practices of the State Department.* (Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, CA, 2012), 41
[11] ibid, 47

While cultural as well as training and educational attributes mark divergences in Foreign Policy professions, our organizational structures would seem to offer safe areas of common convergence. In some sense, they do converge in their hierarchically and bureaucratic organizations, but even here, the differences that do exist can be overcome.

Organizational Patterns

The Departments of State and Defense epitomize and operate from a hierarchical, and highly bureaucratic organizational structure. State, with its 45,000 FSOs, Foreign Service Specialists, civil servants, contractors, and local employees, is organized functionally and regionally, which sounds similar to how the Combatant Commands in Defense are organized. However, where Combatant Commanders (CCDRs) are heavily immersed in and legally responsible for all things occurring in their geographic Areas of Responsibility (AORs,)"… leaders of State's regional bureaus primarily focused on the Washington policy making process...and less on lower-priority specifics in the regions and countries… in their [AORs]."[12]

Interestingly, while organizational charts may depict layers and lines of communication or what is referred to in military parlance as, "chains of command," authority and responsibility, State's communication lines are not as structured. Desk officers and members are more liberal in their communication lines and methods and it is not uncommon for lower level employees to bypass supervision and heads of section, communicating directly with the Ambassador, division chiefs, or beyond, etc. An

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[12] Smith, Anton K. *Turning On The DIME: Diplomacy's Role in National Security.* U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2007), 3

outgrowth of State's organization, owing to the personalities of leaders within the department, is its power structure.

> *Bureaucratic power had come to rest in the division chiefs and the advisors...The heads of all these divisions, like barons in a feudal system weakened at the top by mutual suspicion and jealousy between king and prince, were constantly at odds, if not at war. Their frontiers, delimited in some cases by geography and in others by function, were vague and overlapping.[13]*

Ironically, as a hierarchical organization, the Department of State actually behaves quite "flat" because of the functional divisions and their stove piped nature as well as the relative autonomy of each overseas Embassy or Country Team, where Ambassadors may report directly to the President, but ought to communicate through or with the Secretary of State. An organizational attribute of Defense, less apparent in State, regards successfully allowing CCDRs to focus on command and all that entails. The Department of Defense staunchly enforces and relies upon its chain of command and does not abide breaches to it often. Such a breach in chain of command has been attempted in recent history, where members of the National Security staff attempted to communicate directly with Combatant Commanders, bypassing the Secretary of Defense; however, upon discovery of the breach in propriety, the Secretary of Defense quickly put it to rights and discontinued the attempted practice from the White House staff.

It seems there are more divergences than convergences between the Departments of State and Defense but certainly, there have been times, and will be future opportunities, when the two converge to formulate strong, positive and lasting effects in national security and foreign policy. Knowing the cultural attributes, navigating the organizational structure and owing to the intelligence and dedication of all of these

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[13] Monroe, 4

professionals makes it very plausible and possible that we can bridge the span, disproving the assertion that these two departments are from different planets; less Venutians and Martians and more the spectrum of American greatness that offers such continued promise.

From here let us look at two specific instances to examine times where the two departments converged in process and systems and showed success, and also where the patterns of divergence resulted in a near failure in national strategy.

Road to Reconstruction (Teams)

To find examples of successful Department of Defense and Department of State interagency operations one needs to look no further back than the decade-long operations conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq where Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were effectively employed within broader counter-insurgency doctrine. These civilian-military PRTs operated in semi-permissive environments with the intent to achieve "political objectives, (conduct) counterterrorism and promote social and economic development."[14]

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's efforts to bring critical civilian and military experts together to help Iraqi provincial officials in reconstructing their essential services and overall "governance," came at a crucial time as policy started to align with the reality of an insurgency on the ground.[15] The concept for the make-up of the PRTs differed in Iraq from those in Afghanistan, however, the need for integrated State and Defense activities were essential to create an environment where security and host-nation

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[14] Perito, Robert M. "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq." Published: March 20, 2013 United States Institute for Peace. Online http://www.usip.org/publications/provincial-reconstruction-teams-in-iraq-1 last accessed 23 May 2016.
[15] ibid

government support could thrive. The PRTs in Iraq were generally composed of personnel from USAID, the Departments of State, Agriculture, and Justice, along with contractors and other "Iraqi experts."[16] Usually led by a senior Foreign Service Officer, military participation was often limited; however the PRTs tended to be located on military bases and relied upon the military for security. At the program's high point, there were 25 PRTs operating throughout Iraq and was generally considered successful.[17]

This moderate success story did not come without precedence. The Iraqi and Afghan PRTs trace their roots to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program employed during the Vietnam War. "The CORDS program was implemented through a command and control structure that paralleled or was intertwined with the military command structure down to the province senior adviser level. In addition, to all pacification activities, CORDS was also responsible for providing advice and support to the South Vietnamese militia, conducting the war against the enemy's clandestine politico-military command and administrative infrastructure…, and coordinating with the South Vietnamese government for recovery after the 1968 Tet offensive… The feeling of many who participated in the program was that it had been highly effective, but came too late to alter the war's outcome."[18]

Remarks by former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates at Kansas State University reinforced the lessons learned, legacy, and positive lasting impacts from the CORDS programs and the PRTs.

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[16] ibid

[17] ibid

[18] Yates, Lawrence A., "Vietnam, 1955-1973, The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations, 1789-2005." Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 15 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press), 83 Online http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/yates.pdf last accessed 23 May 2016

However uncomfortable it may be to raise Vietnam all these years later, the history of that conflict is instructive. After first pursuing a strategy based on conventional military firepower, the United States shifted course and began a comprehensive, integrated program of pacification, civic action, and economic development. The CORDS program, as it was known, involved more than a thousand civilian employees from USAID and other organizations, and brought the multiple agencies into a joint effort. It had the effect of, in the words of General Creighton Abrams, putting "all of us on one side and the enemy on the other." By the time U.S. troops were pulled out, the CORDS program had helped pacify most of the hamlets in South Vietnam. The importance of deploying civilian expertise has been relearned – the hard way – through the effort to staff Provincial Reconstruction Teams, first in Afghanistan and more recently in Iraq. The PRTs were designed to bring in civilians experienced in agriculture, governance, and other aspects of development – to work with and alongside the military to improve the lives of the local population, a key tenet of any counterinsurgency effort. Where they are on the ground – even in small numbers – we have seen tangible and often dramatic changes. An Army brigade commander in Baghdad recently said that an embedded PRT was "pivotal" in getting Iraqis in his sector to better manage their affairs.[19]

CORDS in Vietnam and the PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan were born out of necessity as earlier programs and traditional military combat approaches had yielded less than optimal results in countering these insurgencies. Both examples show that when the interagencies, particularly State and Defense, work together in unison with a shared command structure, great results can be achieved.

Analysis and Conclusion

This brief look into the systemic and organizational commonalities and differences between the U.S. Departments of State and Defense yields a number of insights into the reasons for frequent interagency planning dysfunction in the lead-up to conflict resolution and international engagement requiring both diplomacy and defense.

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[19] Landon Lecture (Kansas State University) Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Manhattan, Kansas, Monday, November 26, 2007. Online http://archive.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199 last accessed 23 May 2016.

Chief among the culprits for our "slow starts" in developing a unified approach in Vietnam and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan is the disparity of professional development between the personnel in the two Departments. Simply put, no career model for either the Department of State or Defense exists that deliberately develops leaders to function at the strategic level and serve in the role of intra-departmental integrator.

The CORDS Program and the Iraq and Afghan PRT initiatives highlight how leader development occurs through interagency and joint experiences over a period of time, usually in the midst of a conflict whose outcome is uncertain. As these conflicts progressed, and political goals started to align with military objectives, the two Departments displayed great cooperative thought and tended toward unified action. However, as noted historian Dr. Joseph Collins points out, "Military participation in national decision-making is both necessary and problematic. Part of the difficulty comes from normal civil-military tension, but many instances in the war on terror also show unnecessary misunderstandings."[20]

So then, just how do these two Departments manage leaders to give them the requisite breadth and depth of experience and knowledge required to effectively function and participate in the strategic realm and have they constructed developmental timelines and education opportunities to strengthen interoperability with other government agencies? As described earlier, this is one of the patterns of divergence. Neither department dedicates substantial educational opportunities specifically geared toward the unified development of strategy within a whole of government construct. Experience and

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[20] Collins, Joseph. "Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War." (Washington, D.C. National Defense University Press. September 2015), 71

necessity (when national security objectives are under stress) remain the key drivers of any innovation or impetus to a unified approach in planning. Unfortunately this "pick-up team" mentality does not serve the nation well at the outset of conflicts in which both diplomacy and arms are required.

> *Civilian national security decisionmakers need a better understanding of the complexity of military strategy and the military's need for planning guidance. Senior military officers for their part require a deep understanding of the interagency decisionmaking process, an appreciation for the perspectives and frames of reference of civilian counterparts, and a willingness to embrace and not resist the complexities and challenges inherent in the system of civilian control.[21]*

The ability to build bridges to span the chasms of divergence between departments within the interagency ensures a more unified approach for future challenges. This commentary is not limited to the Departments of Defense and State. For the U.S. to quickly adapt strategy and policy development in a complex world requires attention to these differences before the deployment of FSOs, military members, or even advisors from the Department of Justice, to any hotspot in the world.

From these observations we quickly conclude senior leader education in interagency management must receive greater emphasis throughout the careers of State and Defense Department employees. A unified approach to this education could only benefit both departments on the whole. One specific area for potential future study should be the creation of a National Security University to ensure continuing professional education across the interagency. Such an institution of higher learning, where the best and brightest from all government departments could explore the tougher questions of interagency planning and operations, along with national strategy development, would

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[21] ibid, 71.

create a strong base of professionals prepared execute national policy and strategy on an international stage.

Within U.S. Government departments, certain systemic patterns emerge as the result of the refinement, over decades, of organizational culture. Sometimes these patterns converge with other systems and sometimes they diverge naturally. Through deliberate government action, education could be the single-most important driver to create a new pattern of convergence between the Department of State and the Department of Defense. Historically, when there is convergence of activity between these two important governmental departments, the U.S. has found strategic success. Building a new bridge of interagency education between the two could only help but strengthen our probability of future success.

BIOGRAPHIES

Colonel Jeff Settle, USA, is currently serving as the Chief, Joint Professional Military Education Division, Joint Staff J7, in the Pentagon. He was commissioned an Armor Officer from the United States Military Academy in 1991 with a BS in Civil Engineering. COL Settle earned his Masters of Military Arts and Sciences from the School of Advanced Military Studies in 2004 and has served in a variety of Armor and Strategist (US Army Functional Area 59) assignments in Kentucky, Texas, Germany, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He has also served over 2 years as an exchange officer to the 1st (UK) Armoured Division as the Division G5, and 10 months as a military advisor to the Department of State in the Bureau of Administration.

Lieutenant Colonel Heather A. Cook, USAF, is currently serving as Chief, JOPES/JCET Branch, Current Operations Division, Headquarters, U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Florida. She was commissioned through Air Force Officer Training School in 1996. Lt Col Cook earned a BA in English, Cum Laude, from Texas Tech University in 1996, an MBA, Summa Cum Laude, from Trident University International in 2005 and an MS in Operational Military Science, Air Command and Staff College, Air University in 2008. Prior to her current assignment, Lt Col Cook served as Commander, Detachment 6, USAFCENT Executive Coordinating Agency, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar and Commander, 436th Aerial Port Squadron, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware.

Lieutenant Colonel Wayne R Zuber, USMC, is currently serving as a Top Level School Student – Commandant of the Marine Corps Fellow, at the Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, High Threat Programs, Operations Planning Staff. He was commissioned through the Officer Candidate Course in 1995. LtCol Zuber earned a B.A. in Special Education from the University of Wyoming in 1993 and a Master's Degree in Military Studies from Marine Corps University in 2009. Prior to his current assignment, LtCol served as the Battalion Commander, 3d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion.