Strategy Research Project

A Toolbox for Interagency Cooperation

by

Mr. Shaun J. Ryan
Department of State

United States Army War College
Class of 2015

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A
Approved for Public Release
Distribution is Unlimited

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE	*Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188*

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 01-04-2015	**2. REPORT TYPE** STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A Toolbox for Interagency Cooperation	**5a. CONTRACT NUMBER** **5b. GRANT NUMBER** **5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER**
6. AUTHOR(S) Mr. Shaun J. Ryan Department of State	**5d. PROJECT NUMBER** **5e. TASK NUMBER** **5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER**
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. George Woods Department of Command, Leadership, and Management	**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013	**10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)** **11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)**

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Word Count: 5489

14. ABSTRACT

This paper establishes that the national security environment requires that we operate together. The imperative to unified action applies across the whole United States national security enterprise, and extends to international and multilateral fora. Leaders can apply insights drawn from theories of social network analysis, organizational culture, and organizational traps to better understand common organizational dynamics which affect cooperation between organizations. Taken together, these tools arm senior leaders with a way to achieve greater impact and effectiveness when they work in the interorganizational space. This will lead, in turn, to outcomes which advance the nation’s interests and security.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Liaison, JIIM, Unified Action, Behavioral Science, Organizational Design

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**		31	**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(w/ area code)*
UU	UU	UU	UU		

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8/98), Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

A Toolbox for Interagency Cooperation

by

Mr. Shaun J. Ryan
Department of State

Dr. George Woods
Department of Command, Leadership, and Management
Project Adviser

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the United States Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

Title:	A Toolbox for Interagency Cooperation
Report Date:	01 April 2015
Page Count:	31
Word Count:	5489
Key Terms:	Liaison, JIIM, Unified Action, Behavioral Science, Organizational Design
Classification:	Unclassified

This paper establishes that the national security environment requires that we operate together. The imperative to unified action applies across the whole United States national security enterprise, and extends to international and multilateral fora. Leaders can apply insights drawn from theories of social network analysis, organizational culture, and organizational traps to better understand common organizational dynamics which affect cooperation between organizations. Taken together, these tools arm senior leaders with a way to achieve greater impact and effectiveness when they work in the interorganizational space. This will lead, in turn, to outcomes which advance the nation's interests and security.

A Toolbox for Interagency Cooperation

> We are improving the integration of skills and capabilities within our military and civilian institutions, so they complement each other and operate seamlessly. We are also improving coordinated planning and policymaking and must build our capacity in key areas where we fall short.
>
> —Barack Obama[1]

Across the national security establishment, leaders face an impressive array of challenges. They must balance constrained resources against broad missions. Tolerance for failure is low and expectations high. Leaders have always looked inside their organizations to optimize performance, but the need to partner effectively with external organizations is equally urgent. Partnership and teaming are nearly universally accepted in the United States Government (USG), particularly in national security. Leaders here cannot opt out of cooperating.

In the extensive literature on leadership there is surprisingly little attention to the challenges of working in the interorganizational space. This paper explores three ideas which can help leaders make sense of the dynamics in the cooperative space: *social network analysis* (SNA) clarifies relationships in organizations; organizational culture illuminates organizations' strengths and weaknesses; and organizational traps reveal common but often unseen factors which can derail cooperation. For each idea, this paper provides a basic explanation of the concept, examples of the concept in operation, and a brief discussion of how a leader can apply each idea. The discussions are framed around how the ideas can be applied by a leader to a notional decision to place a liaison officer (LNO) in another organization. The discussions end with examples of questions leaders might ask themselves to help apply each idea.

The goal is not to comprehensively explore these powerful ideas. Rather, it is to propose relatively simple mental frameworks leaders can apply to recognize and respond to organizational dynamics. For consistency, this paper will refer to “interagency” or “interorganizational” efforts and call those who use these ideas “leaders” or “LNO’s,” but the concepts are applicable across a broad spectrum of situations and end-users. They can help inform efforts to create and lead effective coalitions or joint efforts, whether inside or across organizations, or in international and multilateral fora.

Environment and Business Case

In a late 2014 interview, Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno noted “We’ve learned that there will never again be an operation that’s purely . . . military. [We] have to prepare [for] that environment.”[2] His conclusions are widely shared. Collaboration-centric ideas, rooted in private-sector best practices, have taken root across the national security enterprise. There is good reason for this. Done well, integrated and collaborative efforts like cross-disciplinary teams deliver competitive advantages: lower costs, faster execution, and increased quality.[3] These advantages are reinforced by the reality that the United States (US) faces complex missions which no one form of national power can do by itself. At the same time, resources are becoming increasingly constrained. Going it alone increasingly looks like a recipe for failure.

In principle, there is a solid doctrinal basis for government-wide collaboration. Joint Staff Publication 1 embeds the military as one of four critical elements of national power within a wide context stretching across the joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational (JIIM) spheres.[4] From this flows the idea of unified action, which harnesses and directs efforts from all national security actors, not just the military.[5] These ideas are widely accepted. The 2010 NSS' emphasis on the "Whole of Government" was expanded to a "Whole of Community" approach in the 2015 edition, broadening the umbrella under which diverse organizations cooperate to pursue national goals.[6] A similar emphasis runs through key policy documents produced by, among others, the Departments of State and Homeland Security.[7,]

In practice, building effective cooperation is complicated. In the military, the Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA) began breaking Armed Service-centric silos of thought and action in favor of a joint mindset in the 1980's. GNA did not include the civilian interagency. Despite various reform efforts, "joint" national security activities outside the Department of Defense (DoD) are often driven by policy or specific mission needs rather than being fundamental to the institutions involved. This leads to ad-hoc interagency problem solving that often has unexpected 2nd- and 3rd-order effects.[8] This places a special burden on mid- and senior-level leaders managing cooperative efforts, who must compensate for the absence of clear GNA-type frameworks outside DoD.

Events in Iraq after 2003 give a clear example of the price of getting cooperation wrong. The end of force-on-force combat led to a situation which was not easily addressed and lay outside core warfighting skills. "The [new] operational level of war in Iraq was dealing with Iraqis, [NGO's], with the media . . . The center of gravity was the will of the people," in the words of retired Army MG Robert Scales.[9] The US planning for post-war transition produced a series of bodies, the best-known of which was the ineffective and widely-criticized Coalition Provision Authority (CPA) of 2003-4.[10] Instead of backstopping each other, the military and civilian efforts were powerless to prevent Iraq from sinking into an expensive, bloody insurgency.

This failure, along with the trauma of 9-11, drove changes across the USG. By 2010-11, US Forces-Iraq (USF-I) and the US Embassy in Baghdad undertook a joint planning effort for USF-I's withdrawal from Iraq. A RAND study concluded the joint planning process was a marked improvement over the 2003-4 period.[11] This resulted from sustained efforts on both sides, exemplified by structural and doctrinal changes at the Department of State (DoS) and US Agency for International Development.[12] There are still challenges. For example, civilian agencies still struggle to effectively staff key stability operations.[13] Disparities in resources, operating concepts and culture are common in the interagency and need careful management.[14] However, the 2010-11 example shows that better coordination is both feasible and essential.

When cooperation and collaboration are the norm, leaders will have to be as adept at working in or with other organizations or nations as they are in their own organization. The scope of the effort can be huge. A large US embassy country team can have representatives from dozens of agencies, each with different perspectives, priorities and world-views.[15] International or multinational efforts multiply that complexity exponentially. Any decision on "who gets what, when, and how" is inherently politically-charged.[16] With politics come the tricky dynamics of power: "People who have it deny it; people who want it do not want to appear to hunger for it; and people who engage in its machinations do so secretly."[17]

Unified action does not require unanimity of opinion. It does need durable relationships of trust and open communication. Without trust, and solid human bonds that go with it, we are limited in the scope and durability of what we can build.[18] The rewards of successfully managing complex relationships between organizations are great. The main players in routine interorganizational work are leaders and LNO's, and the following sections focus on tools which can help sharpen their efforts.

Social Network Analysis

The power of social network analysis is that it helps map how relationships operate within organizations. Networks are ubiquitous, and the ability to understand and use them is a key talent for leaders. Leaders live in a world full of complex, bureaucratic organizations and must decide how, where and on whom they should spend finite opportunities to build relationships. The LNO's may have to work effectively inside mammoth organizations very different from their own. The SNA offers a mental framework for evaluating these situations, clarifying complexity, and guiding effective cooperation.

Although many definitions of the term exist, in this context a network is a set of actors, either individuals or organizations, and the relationships between them.[19] Networks are social in the sense that their members are interlinked, and interactions drive members' perceptions, beliefs, and actions.[20] Studying or observing these relationships unveils the structure of the network. Understanding the strength and direction of the ties between members shows how the group functions. It also helps explain how the group influences the perceptions and actions of its members.[21]

All members of a network are not created equal. Actors are prominent if their ties make them particularly visible to other actors, either directly or indirectly. Centrality is a related idea, with several definitions and applications. In general, "those actors with the most access or most control or who are the most active brokers will be the most central in the network."[22] This leads in turn to social capital, the sum of the actual and potential resources on which an actor can draw. Social capital can be extracted from a network by buying, selling, or exchanging resources; through an actor's formal position; or through social relations.[23] The goal of interorganizational work can be seen as generating social capital in order to provide benefits to participating organizations.

The effective opposite of having social capital is to be in a "hole," in which actors share a tie, but are weakly or not connected.[24] The relationship between the US military and CPA is a very loose example of a hole. The two groups shared ties: they were often collocated and individual members of them worked together. As organizations, they did not develop effective connections which would have allowed them to work together as a cohesive team.

The degree to which social networks and formal organizational structures overlap varies. From an SNA perspective, identifying who has network centrality or accumulated social capital in an organization or group may reveal a network which is only loosely connected to formal hierarchy. This is an important insight, because visible structures can be unreliable indicators of real influence. Also, all members of an organization belong to one or more networks within it, but there can be multiple networks in an organization, and not everyone in the organization belongs to all of them. Members of a particular project may share a professional social network with each other but not participate in other networks belonging to related projects. Two actors in a group can also share friendship ties without a professional tie, for example.

Nodes and bridges are also useful ideas. The terms come from the way social networks are shown on charts or graphs. A node is a point representing an actor. Lines connect nodes, helping visualize the ties among actors in the network. The line connecting two otherwise self-contained groups is a bridge. Removing the bridge severs the connection between them. Carefully mapping out the contours of organizations' social networks helps leaders decide which nodes to connect for maximum benefit.[25] Conceptualizing relationships between organizations in this way can help maximize the effective use of scarce time and human resources. Leaders can ensure that they are placing their bridges between the parts of organizations where they will be most effective, an important concept in resource-constrained environments.

Social networks have limits. Building strong ties takes time, intensity, trust, and reciprocity—areas where personality is important. Span of control is also an issue. Individuals can manage only around a dozen strong ties at one time, but can maintain large numbers of weak ties.[26] There is a tradeoff. Weak ("arms-length") ties are relatively easy to maintain but tend to be less productive. Strong ("embedded") ties, while limited in number, are more useful for building trust, ensuring rich transfers of information, and solving problems. Weak ties can, however, be warmed up when they are needed.[27] SNA can uncover new or useful actors with which to build ties, but prioritization of effort is still important.

Social capital is not fungible. As will be shown below, actors with significant social capital or centrality in one context may not be able to transfer them to another. In part, this is because of the nature of networks which generate a large proportion of strong ties among members. While often strongly cohesive and effective at generating social capital, they may not welcome outsiders. They often show "in group" behavior–excluding outsiders, demanding much of members, restricting individuals, and sometimes exerting levelling pressure on group members. Actors can also be over-embedded in a subgroup, and lose the benefits of broader ties.[28]

Example One: Robert M. Gates' experience as Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) illustrates several of the ideas described above. Gates had exceptional social capital within DoD, the interagency, and with two Presidents. He combined prominence and centrality to good effect. Gates reached out across a very wide range of contacts for advice when he was nominated—demonstrating he was embedded in a wide network and occupied a central position.[29] He also carefully built productive relationships with two strong-willed Secretaries of State. This created social capital—mutual political benefit. It also bridged a gap across two Washington institutional nodes which are rarely connected as well as they should be.[30] Gates' tenure was not conflict-free—but his reservoir of social capital gave him freedom to pick fights, and win many of the ones that mattered most.

In his memoirs, Gates talks at length about managing a galaxy of meetings, obligations, and partnerships which came with the office. Prioritizing his workload showed that, instinctively or consciously, he was working to achieve a suitable balance of arms-length versus embedded ties across various social networks.[31] Allowing others to have stronger ties than he did to what could easily have been peripheral contacts kept Gates centered and let him concentrate his energy on maintaining strong ties where they mattered most.

Example Two: General James L. Jones served as the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from January 2009 to October 2010. Jones, an accomplished Marine general, was an outsider in a White House dominated by former campaign members. Many of his civilian counterparts consequently arrived in their new positions with a preexisting strong-tie social network. Jones found it extremely difficult to adapt to this reality. Critically, he never developed the same rapport with or access to the President enjoyed by his deputy, Tom Donilon. Consequently, Jones was often perceived as being bypassed by the President in favor of Donilon.[32] Jones' isolation within the White House was evident within a matter of weeks. He quickly became the object of damaging press speculation, and was unable to get help from other administration officials.[33] Ultimately, his tenure proved frustrating and short-lived.

Analysis

Sending an LNO to an organization is a common step to building cooperation. Where to place the LNO in the host organization is a major concern. SNA concepts help map the organizational nodes which need to be bridged. Since personnel resources are likely limited, it is important that they be aligned where they will have the most impact. In SNA terms, an LNO needs to be able to generate the right mix of strong and weak ties, and be central rather than simply prominent.[34] A good central actor, which an LNO needs to become, actively uses numerous, short channels to convey their opinions.[35] Social capital plays a critical role in this scenario. As shown above, a prominent location is not enough. Personality traits are also important. To build social capital in new relationships, the LNO will need to be something of a rainmaker rather than a note-taker. This has implications for the how the LNO is selected, and is explored below.

Questions for Leaders

1. Can my existing interagency contacts help solve my problems? If not, who can?
2. In building ties to a partner, how many people do I know in that organization? Could I reach out to someone in any part of the enterprise, or only to selected

areas? Do I need a permanent presence there, or are existing relationships good enough?

3. What parts of the other organization are the most important to my mission? Is the time spent working with those areas proportional to their importance to my organization? If not, why not?

4. If I sent an LNO to that organization, where would I like them to sit? Where would the other organization place them? If there is a difference, how much does that affect my mission?

5. Do I or my LNO's have contacts who are unusual drains of time and resources? Would my mission suffer if I reduced my contact with them?

6. Who is the ultimate decision-maker for my issues in the partner organization? Can an LNO or I reach them? If not, do I know the right people who can?

7. If I send an LNO, will they have enough access to resources to generate real solutions? Do they have the contacts, seniority and credibility to be the "go-to" in the other organization?

8. Does my LNO candidate have the savvy and understanding needed to assess and adapt to the host organization and effectively represent my interests by creating and using social capital?

Culture:

An organization's culture is the sum of the attitudes, practices and ideas which define how it sees and understands the world around it. Everyone intuitively develops an understanding of their own organization's culture, but organizations' cultures require study to be understood. The key question for an LNO about a partner in cultural terms, is not how the LNO sees them, but how the partner sees itself. To build real cooperation, leaders need to navigate other organizations' culture as astutely as they need to be able to understand and navigate its social networks.

The leading thinker on organizational culture, Edgar Schein, defined it as "[A] pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by the group as it solved its problems . . . that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members."[36] The linkage of culture to learning over time is key. It helps explain why organizational culture endures and is often very hard to change.

Because they are rooted in collective learning, cultures can be, and mostly are, durable. Ignoring the effect of culture on organizations' internal agendas can generate huge problems. Returning to the example of Iraq, the changes between the 2003-2004 and 2010-2011 efforts can be attributed in part to DoD and DoS recalibrating their cultures. One observer argues DoS' change efforts should be understood as part of "a long-running controversy over how to recalibrate the Department to overcome its own limitations."[37] DoS lived for centuries in a Westphalian world of state-to-state diplomatic exchanges. Its structure and worldview were not aligned with DoD or stability operations. (For instance, the country team model used by DoS assumes a starkly different set of command relationships and sometimes timeframes than those found in a combatant command or warzone.)[38] Changing the patterns engrained in DoS over the course of more than two hundred years was necessarily a slow and intricate process.

Understanding cultures takes time and careful study, but there are clues. Organizations and people put their belief systems into action on two levels: what they espouse, and what they actually do. Espoused behavior is what they say they will do in a particular situation. It does not necessarily map to what the person or organization then actually does.[39] While there are often gaps between the two, espoused culture is not always misleading. Much of what organizations display gives valid cues to their identity and aspirations. These include:

1. Rituals and ceremonies;
2. Organizational stories and scripts, which often pass on desired values or behaviors;

3. Jargon;
4. Humor;
5. Physical arrangements, including architecture, décor and dress codes;
6. Formal and informal practices, and,
7. “Enforced and espoused content”—codes of behavior.[40]

These offer important clues for observers about both espoused and actual culture.

It is important to understand why espoused and practiced cultural values differ. The cause may be negative, perhaps reflecting double standards or hypocrisy about espoused values. Alternately, gaps may reflect an organization which aims high but has difficulty delivering. Knowing the difference is critical to understanding how the gaps impact the shared mission.

A classic example of values divergence was Enron. The company’s 64-page code of ethics made for impressive reading.[41] Despite these lofty aspirations, by 2014 16 former Enron executives had been sentenced to prison for their actions leading to the company’s 2001 collapse—probably the best indication of what the company’s actual culture was in practice.[42] Hopefully, leaders and LNO’s will rarely encounter a divergence of this scope. But if they do, it is important to understand the dynamics at play and compensate for them.

Example One: SECDEF Gates’ memoirs provide fascinating insights into his struggles with aspects of DoD’s culture. At the light end, Gates hoped that as SECDEF he would be able to tame DoD’s codependent relationship with PowerPoint presentations—something the current SECDEF also wants to accomplish. Gates’ final verdict was that the effort was an “abject failure” and he was unable to change the entrenched status quo.[43]

A better-known and much more serious example was the struggle to procure and field mine-resistant armored vehicles (MRAP’s). The program fell outside the established policies, plans, and programs for vehicle procurement. Given DoD’s cultural preference for long-term acquisitions and other factors, it languished until the Secretary applied pressure. A second, still-problematic, example was Gates’ frustrations with inertia in the DoD and Veterans’ Administration (VA) elements responsible for dealing with wounded warriors.[44] Problems at the VA continue today despite intense pressure and negative publicity.

Gates laments,

> My fights with the Pentagon . . .made me realize the extraordinary power of the conventional war DNA in the military services, and of the bureaucratic and political power of those . . . who wanted to retain the big procurement programs initiated during the Cold War, as well as the predominance of ‘big war’ thinking.[45]

Gates initially believed he could change some of these situations by changing DoD policy. Change was challenged and sometimes preempted by DoD’s deeply-ingrained ways of dealing with the world. In some cases, these outlasted Gates. The same basic dynamics can be found in almost any organization.[46]

Example Two: One school of thought on Operation Iraqi Freedom holds that cultural factors played a huge rule in the war’s outcome. Former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage speculated that then-SECDEF Donald Rumsfeld’s insistence on going to Baghdad quickly with a small force was a repudiation of the “Powell Doctrine” and its insistence on overwhelming force.[47] The Powell Doctrine, in turn, was a visible example of the Vietnam War’s impact on the Army’s senior leaders.

In this view, the way the Army absorbed and passed on Vietnam's lessons—how it trained, the equipment it bought, the doctrines it developed, the officers it promoted—brought it quick victories in force-on-force fights with the Iraqi Army. The same choices, though, left it unprepared to deal quickly or efficiently with the Iraqi insurgency.[48] If this theory is correct, having a larger force on the ground when the insurgency started would not have guaranteed success. The force—like the wider interagency—was simply not prepared for that mission. The Army's post-Vietnam culture produced solutions optimized for a particular culturally-favored context. It was blindsided when events did not conform to its preferences.

Analysis:

The leader's second step is to assess the host organization's culture and how it impacts cooperation. As demonstrated above, mapping the contours of a new partner's culture is a critical task. Without an accurate appreciation of cultural nuances, there is a danger that cooperation may founder on cultural rocks. Keeping the leader informed about these "soft" issues, as well as more traditionally "substantive" topics, will provide some insurance against asking the partner to do more than it can or will commit to doing. The second take-away is that even high-performing cultures, like the Army in 2003, have blind spots. The LNO can look for these in the host organization. For example, a perceptive outsider's assessment of the Army's preparedness to conduct counter-insurgency missions in 2003-2004 might have differed greatly from the Army's own perceptions. Understanding a partner's blind spots is essential for a leader forging partnerships, but it is also worth pondering what blind spots exists in one's own organization—and how these may distort one's view of oneself and others.

Questions for Leaders

1. How receptive is the other organization to outsiders? Are there particular rituals or processes which confer status as an insider? Does anyone in my organization have these qualifications?

2. What are the key differences between how the other organization and my organization do or see things? How does this affect my mission?

3. How do people who work in the other organization express their identity relative to it? Do most of them “just work there” or are have they bought into the culture?

4. What does the organization say it values (in its work, employees or in other ways) and does this differ from how it behaves in practice? What do the people who work there say they value? Are they different?

5. Does the partner consistently deliver what it promises? If not, why not? How does it explain the situation when it does not deliver?

Organizational Traps

This idea comes from the work of organizational behaviorist Chris Argyris. Argyris believes most people espouse openness, constructive communication, and other positive norms but universally behave in ways which defeat those aspirations. Argyris calls the behavior “defensive reasoning.” Actors desire to feel in control, win, suppress negative feelings, and behave “rationally.” As a consequence, everyone withholds critical information from others in order to gain advantage or avoid conflict—a concept called “undisclosed reservations.”[49] This causes dysfunction and undermines honest communication within organizations.

An example is the universal rule that there are things which can be thought but a smaller subset of things which can actually be said. To highlight instances of this, Argyris suggests a mental or written “left side/right side” exercise in which participants list what they said in a meeting in one column, and what they really thought in the second. Leaders need to recognize that they almost certainly both do this and have it done to them. They have to create conditions for effective exchanges of views to be encouraged in practice, rather than simply in theory. Argyris calls the model which encourages this "productive reasoning." It has three major thrusts: seeking testable information from which to operate; creating informed choices; and vigilantly watching for and correcting errors.[50]

The implications of this in the interagency are self-evident. Any interaction with another organization has potential to fall into these traps. Undisclosed reservations are not always the products of bad faith. People may gloss over or avoid failures or weakness on their own or a partners' part because it is culturally sensitive, to avoid embarrassment, or simply to be polite. The problem is that what appears to be a "white lie" or small omission in one context can have significant second or third order effects.

Example One: Argyris offers a case study from Dean Rusk's term as Secretary of State. Rusk was concerned about DoS' falling status. He called a meeting of senior officials and asked them to support a DoS-wide change initiative based on an honest dissection of the problems DoS encountered. He was disappointed with the officials' noncommittal response. In particular, he felt let down by a senior ambassador he had invited to the meeting because he thought he would be honest. Although the ambassador was critical to his effort, Rusk admitted he had not told the ambassador why he was invited, nor had he expressed his disappointment to him.

The ambassador and his peers admitted to Argyris that they viewed Rusk's proposal as threatening, but felt being honest would be "inappropriate." The officers realized there was a dilemma. Agreeing with the reforms exposed them to career risk and invited organizational disruption, but failure to reform risked marginalizing DoS.

Their solution was to deny that they were experiencing the situation, and then to deny they were denying anything. Rusk undermined his own agenda by espousing transparency and openness which he did not carry forward himself.[51]

Example Two: Gates quoted President Obama: “What I know concerns me. What I don’t know concerns me even more. What people aren’t telling me worries me the most.”[52] Despite the President’s prescience, these concerns would take root and metastasize throughout the Administration’s first-term discussions on troop levels and strategy for Afghanistan. Key civilian advisors were convinced the military was attempting to box the President in by artificially limiting the options they briefed to him.[53] On the other side, the President arguably withheld his own motives. “The only way [Lieutenant General Douglas] Lute could explain the final decision was that the President had treated the military as another political constituency that had to be accommodated.” The implication is that the decision was not the best which could have been made, but the minimum one which was acceptable.[54] Underlying the formal policy discussions were reciprocal sets of largely unstated concerns which colored the views of various actors. Whether the concerns were justified is immaterial. Once in play, they created a charged, adversarial environment.

Analysis

Argyris’ organizational trap concept is insidious because it can undo otherwise careful attention to both social network and cultural considerations. An LNO can be well-placed from a network perspective, equipped to generate social capital, and be culturally fluent, but still fall afoul of unexpressed reservations, motivations or information from either their own or the other organization. Leaders need to ensure that their representatives in other organizations are prepared to operate in an environment where, even from good motives, key information may be withheld from them. Overcoming this requires a strategy for clear, effective communication. Formal agreements to treat sensitive internal discussions or issues as confidential may help overcome defensive reasoning. Leaders need to be aware LNO's may withhold information as well. Finally, leaders need to ensure that they are not withholding key information, consciously or otherwise, from their subordinates. This is critical, because as seen in the Rusk example, this can lead to self-sabotaging behavior.

Questions for Leaders

1. What are the "no-go" topics in my or the other organization?
2. In meetings, are all sides fully exploring our concerns? Are there areas which are left aside because it would be "impolite" or "awkward"? What does a left ride/right side review of the discussion show?
3. Are subordinates, including LNO's, editing out bad news when they brief me? Do I do this to my subordinates, peers, or superiors?
4. If issues, positions or assumptions have been left off the table in dealings between organizations, how critical is it to raise them? How can that be done constructively?
5. Do discussions with the partner center around testable or objective considerations, or around opinions? Where does the data for the discussions come from?
6. Are joint decisions based on shared interests, or one side's prior positions? Has there been any discussion of where we may have made mistakes?

Conclusion

The value of networks is intuitive to many experienced officers and officials. The impact of culture and appropriate communication are also both widely recognized. Used together they are fantastic tools for shaping the cooperative landscape. Awareness of the power of social network perspective, culture, and organizational traps simplifies and clarifies the situations in which leaders and LNO's operate.

None of these tools are substitutes for the human touch. As an experienced member of a foreign security community observed, "You have to work on your relationships…nothing replaces looking them in the eyes and forming a *personal* relationship. It is important that there is a trust relationship there rather than just a positional relationship."[55]

In closing, considering the power and potential impact of the social network perspective, organizational culture, and organizational traps leads to three final conclusions.

First, many of the problems experienced in effective interorganizational work stem from the operation of one or more of the organizational behavior dynamics described in the examples given above. These dynamics can produce negative outcomes in organizations despite the goodwill of individual actors. Recognizing this can help leaders concentrate on correcting misaligned organizational dynamics, rather than personalizing the difficulties.

Second, selecting and deploying liaison personnel optimally requires forethought and patience, both to ensure that they are placed in the right parts of other organizations and to make sure that the people who are selected have the specific personal qualities which will let them make the most of the opportunities they are presented. This should be a deliberate process, not ad hoc.

Third, while this paper explores the dynamics which can make an outbound LNO effective, the lessons cut both ways. The analysis above considers the needs of one side in a relationship. To create a truly cooperative atmosphere, organizations also need to work to create the best possible for conditions for those they host. The social network, cultural and organizational issues explored above all work in both directions.

In summary, this paper established that the national security environment requires that we operate together. It outlined three tools for understanding common organizational dynamics which affect cooperation between organizations. Taken together, these tools arm senior leaders with a way to achieve greater impact and effectiveness when they work in the interorganizational space. This will lead, in turn, to outcomes which advance the nation's interests and security.

Endnotes

[1] Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 14.

[2] William T. Eliason, "An Interview with Raymond T. Odierno," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 75 (November 2014), http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/NewsArticleView/tabid/7849/Article/577554/jfq-75-an-interview-with-raymond-t-odierno.aspx (accessed November 26, 2014).

[3] Time Stevens, "Integrated Product Development," *Industry Week* 251.5 (June 2002): 21-28.

[4] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 2013), I-11-13.

[5] Ibid., II-7-8 and II-13-25.

[6] Obama, *National Security Strategy of the United States,* 8.

[7] Hillary Clinton, *Leading Through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2010), ii-viii, 21-22, 26-31, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf (accessed February 17, 2015); Jeh Johnson, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, June 18, 2014), 39-45 and 83-93, http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2014-qhsr-final-508.pdf (accessed February 17, 2015).

[8] This has led to decades of unanswered calls for systemic reform. Less ambitious proposals fare no better, as shown by inaction on calls for a single National Security Budget. Christopher Holshek, "America's First Quarter Millennium: Envisioning A Transformed National Security System in 2026," 7, http://0183896.netsolhost.com/site/wp-

content/uploads/2011/12/pnsr_americas_first_quarter_millennium.pdf (accessed October 10, 2014); Lawrence Korb and Miriam Pemberton, eds., “Report of the Task Force on A Unified Security Budget for the United States, 2007,” May 2006, http://www.comw.org/pda/fulltext/0605unifiedsecuritybudget.pdf (accessed March 19, 2015).

[9] Ibid., 225.

[10] Observers called the CPA “a house built on sand” and “a pick-up team,” but perceptive insiders were just as critical. “One of the things that struck me in the summer of 2003 was how hard people were working, but how little effect it was having,” noted one. Another former official lamented “[I]t was very obvious to me that we couldn’t do this, we could not run a country that we did not understand. . . . .It was very much amateur hour to me, with all respect.” While the CPA’s inability to effectively work with the military is key issue, the organization’s leadership challenges and internal dysfunction were also significant impediments. Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 203-213.

[11] Richard R. Brennan, Jr., ed., *Ending the US War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of US Forces-Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2013), 81-95, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR232/RAND_RR232.pdf (accessed January 5, 2015).

[12] QDDR 2010, 135-137 and 142-43.

[13] This article paints a fascinating picture of a particular DoS employee in rural Afghanistan whose effectiveness was due almost completely to how atypical he was relative to the norm. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “In Afghanistan’s Garmser District, Praise for a U.S. Official’s Tireless Work,*” Washington Post Online*, August 13, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/in-afghanistans-garmser-district-praise-for-a-us-officials-tireless-work/2011/07/29/gIQA2Cc0DJ_story.html (accessed December 30, 2014).

[14] Benjamin D. Kauffield, *USAID & DOD: Analysis and Recommendations to Enhance Development-Military Cooperation* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College Press, August 2014), 1.

[15] Neyla Arnas, “Connecting Government Capabilities for Overseas Missions,” in *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations,* ed. Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin (Washington, DC: Center for Technology and National Security Policy and National Defense University Press, 2009), 231-2.

[16] Jeffrey Pfeffer, “Understanding the Role of Power in Decision Making,” in *Classics of Organization Theory*, ed. Jay M. Shafritz, J. Steven Ott, and Yong Suk Jang (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), 279.

[17] Rosabeth Moss Kantor, “Power Failure in Management Circuits,” in *Classics of Organization Theory*, ed. Jay M. Shafritz, J. Steven Ott, and Yong Suk Jang (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), 320.

[18] John J. Burnham, CAPT, USN (RET), former JIATF-NCR commander, personal communication with author, March 2, 2015.

[19] Chad Whelan, *Networks and National Security: Dynamics, Effectiveness and Organization* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 3.

[20] David Knoke and James H. Kuklinski, *Network Analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1982), 9.

[21] Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

[22] Ibid., 173-4.

[23] Jeffrey A. Miles, *Management and Organizational Theory* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 249-50.

[24] Ibid., 299

[25] Wasserman and Faust, 94-95 and 114-115.

[26] Miles, 298

[27] Ibid., 298.

[28] Ibid., 251.

[29] Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 21-3.

[30] Ibid., 91 and 100.

[31] Ibid., 80-87.

[32] Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 343-4.

[33] Gates, 287-292.

[34] Woodward, 197-200.

[35] Noah E. Friedkin, Structural Bases of Interpersonal Influence in Groups: A Longitudinal Case Study," *American Sociological Review* 58, 6 (December 1993): 864.

[36] Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco Jossey-Bass, 2004), 17.

[37] James A. Schear and Leslie B. Curtin, "Complex Operations: Recalibrating the State Department's Role" in *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations,* ed. Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin (Washington, DC: Center for Technology and National Security Policy and National Defense University Press, 2009), 95-97.

[38] For a persuasive analysis of the history, strengths, and weaknesses of the country team model see: Robert B. Oakley and Michael Casey, Jr., "The Country Team: Restructuring America's First Line of Engagement," *Strategic Forum* 227 (September, 2007), http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/sf227.pdf (accessed March 25, 2015).

[39] Schein, 30.

[40] Joanne Makin, “Organizational Culture: Pieces of the Puzzle” in in *Classics of Organization Theory*, ed. Jay M. Shafritz, J. Steven Ott, and Yong Suk Jang (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), 375-8.

[41] Ken Lay, “Enron Code of Ethics,” July 1, 2000, http://www.agsm.edu.au/bobm/teaching/BE/Cases_pdf/enron-code.pdf (accessed January 11, 2015).

[42] Ken Silverstein, “Enron, Ethics and Today’s Corporate Values,” *Forbes*, May 14, 2013, http://www.forbes.com/sites/kensilverstein/2013/05/14/enron-ethics-and-todays-corporate-values/ (accessed January 11, 2015).

[43] Gates, 82-86.

[44] A case can also be made for this incident as an expression of one of the dangers of overly-embedded social networks (see Miles, 251), which suppresses members’ ability to receive input from outside their immediate environment. Potentially, the signals received from outside the procurement social network, e.g. Congressional and SECDEF pressure, could be seen as being weak signals and less important or compelling than the case for maintaining the status quo generated more strongly from other, closer parts of the officials’ networks. Gates, 135-142.

[45] Gates, 143.

[46] It is easy to vilify the people on the other side of these anecdotes, but this misses the point. It is unlikely that any of the people Gates felt were obstructionist were motivated by mala fide intentions. They were, rather, deeply embedded in cultures—and almost certainly also incentive structures—where there was divergence between the espoused values and how they were translated into action. There are no easy fixes for these situations.

[47] Ricks, 102.

[48] Ricks, 127-133.

[49] Chris Argyris, *Organizational Traps: Leadership, Culture and Organizational Design* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-11, 63.

[50] Ibid., 64.

[51] Ibid., 12-18.

[52] Gates, 300.

[53] Woodward, 318-323.

[54] Woodward, 338.

[55] Wheelan, 125.