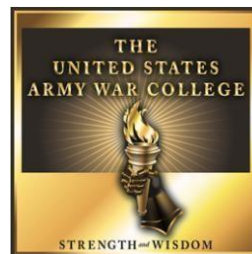# The 3-D Planning Process: Does it Work?

by

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Abstract

The 3D (Diplomacy, Development, and Defense) Planning Process is a novel concept meant to fuse together critical aspects of our nation's whole of government approach to international affairs. Despite a bevy of key strategic documents, U.S. Foreign Policy lacks focus, structure, and accountability across the interagency to make it effective and efficient. From the local through the regional to the national level, issues of poor coordination, boundary confusion, and bureaucratic competition grow worse the higher one gets in the relations between the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Department of Defense. American Foreign Policy requires effective synchronization of the different parts of government. This effort would involve national-level leadership and a comprehensive review of interagency collaboration, organization, and policies to address some of the obvious problems with the current approach.

The 3-D Planning Process: Does it Work?

Most people remember both the Ebola Crisis of 2014 in West Africa and America's subsequent effort to stop this deadly pandemic from spreading around the world. What most Americans do not remember or even realize is that this response was largely improvised, as various components of the United States interagency scrambled to plan for and react to this humanitarian disaster. The Ebola Crisis is a specific example of an instance where each government agency and department was focused on the same task: saving lives and preventing the disease from spreading. Yet even in an episode with clear agreement over straightforward goals, the interagency process was still bogged down in layers of bureaucratic policy and webs of poor communication and collaboration.

In its own internal After Action Review, the "Ebola Response Lessons Learned Report," the Department of Defense acknowledged that policy guidance, coordination and communication, and a common understanding and agreement of roles and responsibilities between federal agencies and departments were all substandard.[1] Although the American response was broadly a success—many lives were saved and the spread of the virulent disease was stemmed—the challenges and inefficiencies involved in the operation highlighted important issues in America's Foreign Policy. It proved a need for a "whole of government approach" to international relations in order to link military resources with other important elements of national power: the so-called "soft power" that blends diplomacy and economic development. Many documents, from the National Security Strategy to the National Military Strategy to the Department of State and USAID Strategic plan, inform American strategy. But in part because so many documents inform it, U.S Foreign Policy can appear confusing and unclear, absent the

rigor that compels collaboration to make our smart power the best that it can be. Despite attempts to encourage cooperation and communication within the interagency, particularly between the Department of State, the US Agency for International Development, and the Department of Defense, the U.S. still lacks the efficiency and effectiveness that the premiere global power requires. The lack of cohesiveness in the policy is further hindered by regions and bureaus that are not aligned and that therefore exacerbate the lack of agency synchronization.

That kind of collaboration is commonly referred to in policy documents as the "3D Planning Process," for Diplomacy, Development, and Defense. It is a powerful concept. But it lacks national level support and enforcement—and without federal-level emphasis to drive a whole of government approach, the 3D planning process is far from reaching its full potential. As some senior government officials have noted, coordination and cooperation across the interagency is dysfunctional, almost broken, especially within the confines of the Washington D.C. beltway. Getting the various agencies to coordinate and cooperate takes a level of equality between the key stakeholders of the 3Ds that currently does not exist within the government. There are instances of successful collaboration and communication across our government but it takes an investment in our most precious resources—people and time.

Africa presents a useful case study to investigate both the collaboration and conflicts between the diplomacy, development, and defense efforts in this region. It provides a lens to explore what is working and not working in U.S. Foreign Policy at the local, regional, and national levels. While there are numerous federal documents that outline processes and policies for interagency cooperation and communication, the

government lacks an enforcement mechanism to make these powerful departments work together above the individual country and, to some extent, regional level. There are several ways to address the issues within the 3D Planning construct and to strengthen our role as an effective world leader. All of them start at the very top of the federal government. The President must develop a comprehensive and holistic U.S. Foreign Affairs Policy; strengthen and enforce current executive branch policies regarding governmental operations; assess and revise the regional boundaries of the 3Ds; and work with Congress to require a whole of government interagency review while demanding better coordination, collaboration, and communication between the Departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Relief.

There is no single written document that directs the nation's Foreign Policy. U.S. Foreign Policy is guided by a number of sources, ranging from informal speeches, press releases, visits by and to heads of state, to formal documents generated by the Congress, the President, and various federal departments and agencies. The most significant formal document that the President produces to explain a vision for the nation is the *National Security Strategy* (*NSS*). Per the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, the President is required to prepare a NSS for Congress every year.[2]

If it were produced on its pre-arranged timeline and assumed a format both the President and the Congress agreed upon, the NSS would be a powerful tool to officially define American Foreign Policy. This, however, is not the case. Although required annually, there have been just four *NSS* reports in the past 14 years. Since September 2002, these key but inconsistent documents do not adequately address Africa, and fail

to provide a coherent policy that addresses U.S. engagement with the 54 African nations or tackles the fundamentally strategic issues that affect American-African relations. The first George W. Bush National Security Strategy, produced just one year after the 9/11 attacks on America by al-Qa'ida, was very broad, with a distinct focus on counter-terrorism and security in nearly every region of the world—but it offered little specificity on plans and programs to support Africa, then or in the future.[3]

To properly reflect America's Foreign Policy, the *NSS* would need to include specific details, rather than a vague list of good ideas for the world. In February 2015, President Obama released his second National Security Strategy, a document remarkably similar to the three previous iterations in its goal of countering terrorism across the globe. The 2015 *NSS*, however, goes much further than its predecessors, with clearly-identified programs tied to expanding American values and interests on the African continent. The text includes specifics regarding security cooperation, declaring America's intention to "strengthen the operational capacity of regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and broaden the ranks of capable troop-contributing countries, including the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, which will help African countries rapidly deploy to emerging crises."[4] Towards the end of the 29-page document, the President devotes more than a page to African issues focused on peace, stability, health, famine, human rights, and leadership in an effort to curb violence, reduce conflicts, combat disease, and improve and invest in Africa's future. North Africa, the Sahel, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, Congo, the Central African Republic, and Somalia are all mentioned by name, while the text also addresses the concern over the growing youth population and urbanization across the region.[5] The

2015 *NSS* foregrounds major issues in Africa in a way that none of the preceding strategies did and formalizes support of American efforts in the region. It is a clear improvement over its three predecessors. But even this new emphasis is frustratingly ambiguous and fails to identify *which* federal department or agency will accomplish the tasks and programs it outlines and *who* will coordinate and lead these efforts at the regional level.

No other government publication lays out America's Foreign Policy in a single coherent document, though various agencies produce their own plans. The Departments of State and Defense have additional documents and policies, subordinate to the *NSS*, which govern their actions and efforts. At the highest level, DoS and USAID together produce two important papers—the *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* and the *Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan*. This Strategic Plan is a joint document that provides a shared mission statement and strategic goals and objectives along with general performance goals.[6]

For its part, the DoD produces two key strategic documents subordinate to the *NSS*—the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (now known as the *Defense Strategic Review* [DSR]), written by the Secretary of Defense, and the *National Military Strategy* (*NMS*), written every two years by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). The NMS broadly covers the National Security Interests, National Military Objectives, and the Prioritized Missions for the Joint Force.[7] As with the *NSS*, none of these documents assigns specific tasks or responsibilities to specific agencies, departments, or commands in order to create the conditions to achieve the goals and objectives identified by the President and the subordinate agencies.

Cobbled together, all the various government papers on relations with other nations and world issues would generally represent U.S. Foreign Policy. But the White House does not write the majority of these pieces, which causes complications and confusion. The DoS, USAID, and the DoD all produce their own documents to provide guidance and policy for their personnel. The State Department, for instance, has numerous policies ranging from climate change to food security to trafficking in persons that are explained in detail on their homepage.[8] On its website, USAID has an Operational Policy page called ADS—Automated Directives System, which "contains the organization and functions of USAID, along with the policies and procedures that guide the Agency's programs and operations."[9] And the Defense Department has a number of critical publications (some of them classified) detailing the policies, missions, and responsibilities for its subordinate organizations. None of these documents are directly nested within the products of the other departments or agencies to form a consolidated, coherent national foreign policy.

Near the end of his first term in office, with no formal, unified foreign policy outlined in a single document, President Obama focused on one particular region of the world in an effort to harness the government's efforts for the future. In June 2012, the White House published Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) #16 entitled the *US Strategy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa*.[10] Similar in its wording to the African passages in the 2015 *NSS,* the broad document, with detailed initiatives and goals related to issues for the majority of the continent, provides no direction for achieving these goals to any specific individual or federal entity. This lack of guidance exacerbates the confusion and friction among U.S. agencies working on the African continent. To date, Africa is the

only region that has a published PPD of this nature, adding to the policy confusion within the government.

The 3Ds may seem like peer organizations but they are actually not equals, which causes relational problems at the most senior levels. Although all headquartered in Washington, DC, the DoS, USAID, and DoD are each structured, and operate, differently. The President, with the Senate's confirmation, chooses the leaders of each of these organizations: the Secretary of State, the Administrator of USAID, and the Secretary of Defense. The Secretaries of State and Defense are key members of the President's Cabinet and advise him directly on a regular basis. The USAID Administrator, however, is treated as a subordinate to the Secretary of State and has much less frequent interaction with the Chief Executive.

Other problems within the 3D process stem from geography rather than from organizational structure. The White House, on its Foreign Policy homepage, divides the African continent into two sections—North Africa and the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, without specifying which countries belong to which regions.[11] This aptly characterizes the problem about this diverse continent, and highlights the confusion, from the most senior levels, about U.S relations with Africa.

Adding to the lack of synchronization and confusion, the 3Ds also arrange themselves differently on the African continent. The DoS splits its operations in Africa along the traditional language and religious divide of the Sahara Desert. The Department is organized with six main sub-compartments, each headed by an Under Secretary. One of these offices is the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, which is further divided into seven bureaus. Two of these bureaus are regionally focused on

parts of Africa: the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. The former is focused on U.S. policy towards the 49 countries that make up sub-Sahara Africa with four main areas of emphasis: "1) Strengthening Democratic Institutions; 2) Supporting African economic growth and development; 3) Advancing Peace and Security; 4) Promoting Opportunity and Development," according to its own bureau description.[12] Those 49 countries include the majority of the African continent and comprise what many people identify as "Africa" based on related cultures and ethnicities. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs stretches from the western edge of the African continent across the Middle East to include Iran. It includes five countries on the continent of Africa, and—unlike its companion regional bureau in the State Department—its policy issues focus on "Iraq, Middle East peace, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and political and economic reform," according to its bureau description.[13] Dividing the northern portion of Africa from the rest of the continent precludes a consistent DoS policy for the whole African continent.

USAID, in contrast, divides its efforts based on development needs. USAID organizes its activities into 14 different bureaus, five of which are regionally based.[14] Similar to the State Department's structure for the African continent, USAID has two regional bureaus that focus on different geographic areas. The Bureau for Africa provides assistance to 42 needy countries in sub-Sahara Africa through 27 regional and bilateral missions "to improve access to and delivery of health services, to support more accountable and democratic institutions, to start businesses and foster an environment attractive to private investment, and to stave off conflict and strengthen communities."[15] USAID's Bureau for the Middle East is comparable to the DoS's Bureau of Near Eastern

Affairs in its coverage of territory. Two of the Bureau for the Middle East's seven

bilateral missions support development programs in four North African countries.[16] In all,

USAID's development programs support 46 of Africa's 54 countries.

Adding to the friction at the interagency level, the Department of Defense

employs a radically different organizational structure than the rest of the federal

government. Without the diplomatic and development missions of the other agencies,

the DoD concerns itself primarily with geography when partitioning the world. The

largest department in the federal government, the DoD is organized into numerous

departments, agencies, field activities, and Combatant Commands.[17] In a presidentially

approved document entitled the *Unified Command Plan* (*UCP*), "the missions,

responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility (AORs) for commanders of

combatant commands ('Combatant Commanders')" are explained in detail.[18] Two of the

six geographically-oriented commands have an interest in the African continent. The

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), with its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, has an

AOR that encompasses "the entire continent of Africa (minus Egypt)" and includes the

surrounding waters on its east, west and south coasts.[19] The U.S. Central Command

(CENTCOM), based in Tampa, Florida, has a geographic AOR covering all of what is

traditionally considered the Middle East including the African country of Egypt.[20] The

separation by six time zones of these two four-star commands contributes to incongruity

on issues and plans. The *UCP* directs a list of 15 broad responsibilities for these

geographic Combatant Commanders, including "planning, conducting, and assessing

security cooperation activities" and "planning for and conducting military support to

stability operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief, as directed."[21] This

vague wording provides little guidance to the four-star Combatant Commander when it comes to working with other government agencies in his AOR.

To add to the confusion, both within the DoD and in dealing with the rest of the interagency, there is an additional part of the DoD that is also involved with international issues besides the Combatant Commanders—the Under Secretary for Policy in the office of the Secretary of Defense. This senior civilian has five Assistant Secretaries of Defense (ASD) working for her, one of whom is responsible for International Security Affairs. This ASD reports to the Secretary of Defense and is responsible for providing policy advise on security matters and relations with much of Europe, Africa and the Middle East.[22] Her office is further divided into regions, including one with an Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs and one with an Assistant Secretary for the Middle East.[23] Neither of these offices is required to coordinate with the Combatant Commanders of their respective AORs to synchronize military policy and activities in these regions.

The friction and lack of unity of effort inherent among these divergent structures is plainly evident on a map depicting the boundaries of the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), the State Department's regional bureaus, and USAID's bureau borders. While seams are sometimes useful to ensure that there are no large gaps in coverage and responsibilities, the lack of continuity between the interagency hinders affective assistance and success in U.S. Foreign Policy. This is particularly evident across the northern portion of Africa, which has become a terrorist haven for training and recruiting.
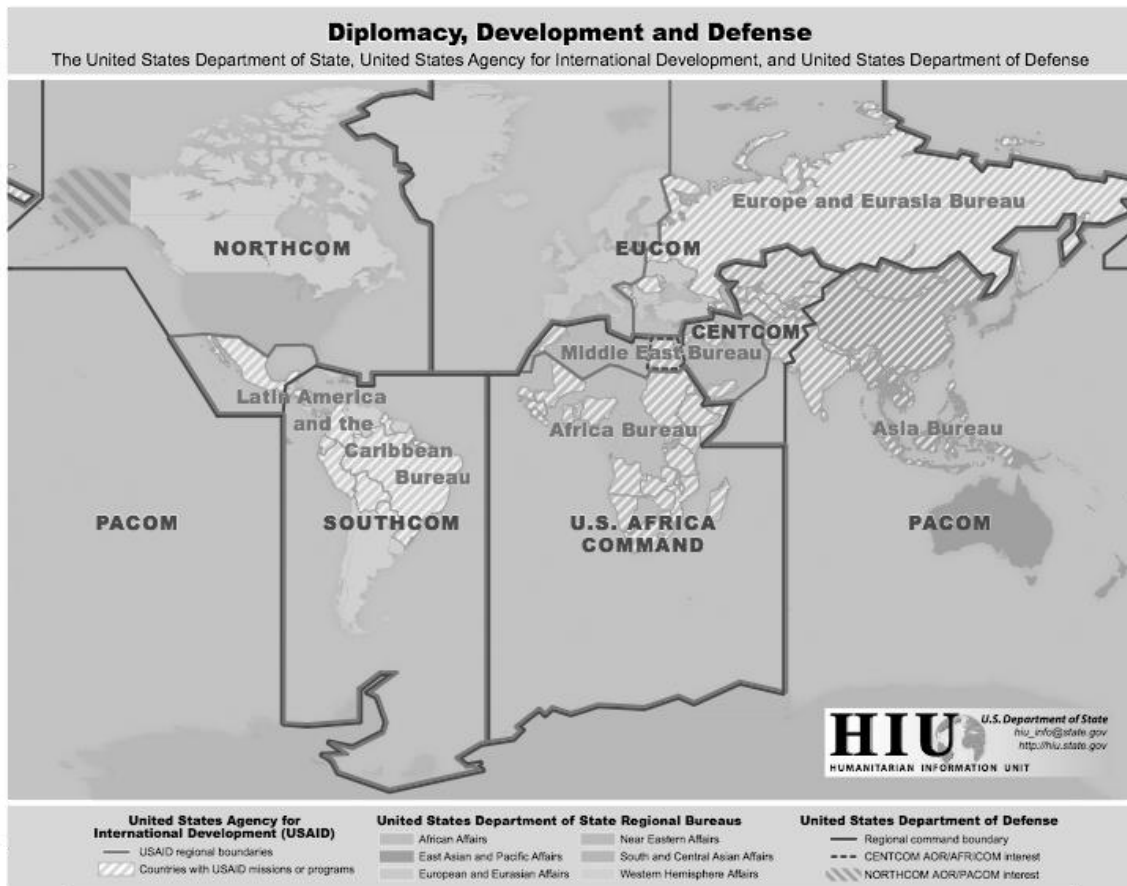
Figure 1. U.S. Department of State, USAID, and U.S. Department of Defense Boundaries[24]

The sheer number of organizations these three institutions encompass makes constructive coordination nearly impossible. In Africa alone, there are two GCCs (USAFRICOM and USCENTCOM), two DoS Regional Bureaus (African Affairs and Near Eastern Affairs), and two USAID Regions (the Bureaus for Africa and Middle East). With six different management and command structures, none of which fully align or have the same borders, there is no one individual in charge to nest and fuse the efforts of the different agencies and departments together. Given these various organizations and their mismatched areas of responsibility, any true coordination of

efforts for Africa as a whole continent requires communication and action at the most senior levels of government. For better effectiveness, this synchronization would, at a minimum, take place at the Secretary/Administrator level to best accommodate equality amongst the various four-star commanders, assistant secretaries, and assistant administrators.

America has invested heavily in Africa over the years in uncoordinated and duplicative efforts and programs. One reporter estimated in 2009 that more than $50 billion flows into Africa each year through various international sources.[25] Numerous American programs provide financial aid to Africa, making it difficult to calculate an exact dollar figure of support from the federal government. These diverse programs are not directly connected or coordinated, with money going towards a variety of diverse issues such as health concerns and disease prevention, food expansion and security, energy development, and security assistance and training.[26] While the USAID budget is nested inside the DoS's budget under the title *Department of State and Other International Programs*, the DoD has its own separate budget.[27] Each department and agency provides separate funding lines for various aid programs that are not synchronized by region or bureau. According to the Congressional Research Service, five of the top 10 recipients of U.S. Foreign Aid in both 2012 and 2013 were African nations.[28] Yet, despite this huge amount of U.S. and international funding, Africa – remains a continent overwhelmed by corruption, illiteracy, disease, and instability.[29]

A certain amount of tension among competing organizations can be healthy, facilitating creative thinking and new approaches to problem solving. In the U.S. efforts in Africa, however, that tension is often eclipsed by competition and in-fighting in areas

where responsibilities overlap between departments. For decades there has been

relentless bureaucratic friction among U.S. Government agencies. Former US AID

Assistant Administrator, Philip L. Christianson, addressed this issue in his 2009

testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs:

> I should start off by noting that the fundamental issue we have been asked
> to address in this hearing has been the subject of bureaucratic infighting
> and endless conflict since December 1942 when Franklin Roosevelt set
> up the first independent civilian agency to take charge of relief and
> reconstruction in the liberated territories. It took exactly four days for the
> aid agency, the Pentagon and the State Department to begin what Dean
> Acheson later described as the "civil war within the Roosevelt
> Administration over the control of the economic policy and operations
> abroad."[30]

This statement highlights the problem that has plagued every administration for more

than 70 years.

Recognizing the history of struggle between these agencies, there has been a

call for action: more cooperation and less competition. During the same 2009

Congressional Hearing, Nancy Lindborg, President of Mercy Corps and a former

member of USAID, argued, "We are at a pivotal political moment today. There is rising

consensus both here in Washington and beyond that we as a nation have an

opportunity and a need to rebalance our development, diplomacy and defense

capacities, and find ways to apply those to meet the critical foreign policy challenges

ahead."[31] There was a significant alarm during the hearing regarding the Federal

Government's growing use of the U.S. Military to conduct engagement and

development in other nations. Lindborg's quote also underscores the shortage of a

coherent foreign policy and a lack of senior leadership to energize and focus America's

efforts abroad. Lindborg went on to express her concerns, arguing, "It is essential that

we have a stronger and more vibrant civilian leadership, and that this is critical to fully

reflect who we, as a nation, want to be in the world."[32] The need for a central authority

figure to establish, guide, and direct U.S. Foreign Policy at the regional and national

level becomes evident as one looks deeper into the issues associated with just Africa.

Over the years, many in and out of government have recognized the

dysfunctional relations within the interagency, particularly between the DoS, USAID,

and DoD when operating in the same AORs. Senior officials have called for the need for

a whole of government approach to operate in today's complex security environment

suggesting understanding, cooperation, and integration of efforts—in essence, more

teamwork.

This whole of government approach is not a new concept. In the *2006*

Quadrennial Defense Review (*QDR*), then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

recommended changes to improve the interagency process, which would result in an

improvement in "unity of effort for complex interagency operations abroad, providing

greater Presidential flexibility in responding to security challenges."[33] The Secretary

went on to describe a number of broad suggestions to enhance interagency

effectiveness, including strengthening both the DoD and DoS, allowing more discretion

in the budget for the President to move funding for projects and programs to the best

suited agency, and restructuring the DoD's regional operations centers to better support

collective government efforts. The DoD produced this in-depth document after more

than four years of war, during which it recognized that the military simply could not do

everything. Many of the insights, findings, and recommendations in the 2006 *QDR*

sprang from those experiences. (Significantly, the 2006 *QDR* devoted more than a page

to recommending reforms to improve the use of U.S. Foreign Aid and Assistance.)

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had a high physical and fiscal toll on the U.S.

Military and forced many service members to conduct civic aide-type duties much

different from those they had trained for. As early as 2007, then-Secretary of Defense

Robert M. Gates publicly articulated the importance of the use of all elements of

national power and acknowledged the importance of more funding and support for the

DoS and USAID. Gates suggested that, "There is a need for a dramatic increase in

spending on the civilian instruments of national security—diplomacy, strategic

communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and

development."[34] Recognizing the strain on the military, Gates recognized that civilian

agencies must be resourced and supported if they are to be active participants in

diplomacy and development. In the January 2009 *Quadrennial Roles and Missions

Review Report*, Gates emphasized the need for this approach in his opening statement

to the 37-page report: "we must improve our soft power: our national ability to promote

economic development, institution-building and the rule of law, internal reconciliation,

good governance, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic

communications, and more."[35] More than anyone else in government at the time,

Secretary Gates advocated for better collaboration within the interagency to enable U.S.

Foreign Policy.

As an initiative, the 3D Planning Process, showed great promise, but has not

been fully enforced by President Obama and his staff. As part of the new *U.S. Global

Development Policy* (PPD #6) released on September 22, 2010, these guidelines were

designed to integrate all government and non-government agencies and departments in

an endeavor to boost American focus on external development. The policy called for

"development, diplomacy, and defense efforts [that] mutually reinforce and complement one another in an integrated comprehensive approach."[36] Within weeks of its release, the senior officials of DoS, USAID, and DoD publicly endorsed the merits of the 3D framework. These leaders chartered the 3D Planning Group to improve and strengthen the planning systems of the three agencies working together through better communications and collaboration to settle interagency disputes and synchronize efforts. The group's purpose is to help members of the various organizations to better understand the roles, functions, funding, and personalities of the others involved at the country, regional, and national levels while coming together to reach solutions to issues, problems and projects.[37]

Though PPD#6 is directive in emphasizing the expanded duties and responsibilities of USAID (tasking it "to develop robust policy, planning, and evaluation capabilities" regarding development and "to formulate the U.S. approach to multi-country cross-cutting sector development strategies") there has not been any accountability or enforcement of these requirements by the nation's leadership.[38] The USAID Administrator remains a relative outsider within the government: it is not a cabinet-level position and is effectively subordinate to the Secretary of State. National-level development policy is actually run by the National Security Council staff, where most program and policy decisions are made.

It is hard to dispute the impression that U.S. Foreign Policy is disjointed and ambiguous in its narrative and execution. PPD #23, the *U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy* published by President Obama in April 2013, adds to the confusion by positing more lofty international goals without assigning responsibility to any agency or person to

ensure those aims are acted on and achieved. Proactive in conception, PPD #23 is meant to strengthen relationships with nations that have values and interests similar to the United States while helping to build national, regional, and world security through stronger military and governance alliances. It even argues the importance of the whole of government approach in synchronizing the efforts of the U.S. agencies involved in these national. But it provides no substantive directives for action within the interagency.[39]

A bevy of official documents and reports have outlined weaknesses in the American approach to foreign policy. But despite the findings and recommendations of the 2006 *QDR* and the 2009 *Roles and Missions Review*, the production of PPD #6 and the 3D Planning Process, and the release of PPD #23, there have been no real substantive improvements in interagency collaboration. That is a real failure. As then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, declared in September 2015, "The phrase whole-of-government is not just desirable—it's actually imperative."[40] The Chairman went on to discuss the importance of aspects of national power beyond just the military instrument including diplomacy, economic development, law enforcement, and governance, arguing that the military creates the conditions for the other elements of power, the rest of the government, to work.[41]

Recognizing some of the relational and effectiveness issues within the government, Senator John McCain, current Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, began a review of the Goldwater-Nichols Act earlier this year. During his testimony to this committee, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense James R. Locher III cited the criticality of the situation within the interagency:

> This [U.S. National Security] system, centered on the National Security Council and the hierarchical committee system but encompassing the complex whole of national security institutions, is profoundly broken. All major national security missions require an interagency "whole of government" effort, but we have repeatedly witnessed the system's inability to integrate the capacities and expertise of departments and agencies. The brokenness of the overall national security system will hamper the effectiveness of U.S. foreign and security policy no matter how well DoD transforms its internal operations or its performance at the operational level of war.[42]

U.S. Foreign Policy is most successful at the local, or country team, level. Far away from the bureaucracy of Washington D.C., representatives of the U.S. government from various departments and agencies work closely together to develop and execute detailed plans that work for their particular country. These efforts, headed by the U.S. Ambassador serving as the Chief of Mission to that particular country, are centered on making that specific Integrated Country Strategy a success. Collaboration happens at this level due to proximity and necessity. These individuals usually work in the same building and have a generally centralized focus on the country where they are serving. As explained in The U.S. Institute for Peace's *Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations*, "While some country teams will be more formal than others in terms of agenda, goals, work plan, and minutes, most will likely be key forums for getting action, plugging gaps, and addressing overlaps."[43] At this local level, the collaborative and cooperative concepts of the 3D Planning Process work well in countries where all three agencies are represented (USAID only provided assistance to 42 African nations in 2012 while there are State and Defense Department representatives assigned to all 54 countries).[44]

At the regional level things get confusing, with different priorities and policies based on the agenda of each agency. Africa has six different regional organizations

representing the State Department, USAID, and the Defense Department—two from each of the 3Ds. The borders and boundaries that make up these regions and bureaus are more than seams between the different organizations; they are gaps where issues are frequently missed or ignored between various areas. Regional strategies are not aligned by agency, and the system lacks efficiency when it comes to integrating priorities and coordinating funding for projects. According to Beth Cole, former Director of the Office of Civil-Military Cooperation at USAID, "The bureaus in the same agency often do not work well together where they have the continent divided between them. AFRICOM does not get why they have to work with multiple bureaus. It is a mess."[45]

At the national level, interagency collaboration is the least effective and efficient. With her vast experience working at the national level, Cole explained, "Congress is stove piped, authorities and fundings are stove piped and each agency's internal processes do not require coordination. The White House and the NSC do not provide directives that are sustainable or enforceable. And, there is no interagency planning cell."[46] Her description of the issues in Washington D.C. illuminate the friction the various Congressional committees and the particular agencies that they work with regularly, from the House or Senate Foreign Relations Committees with the DoS to the House or Senate Armed Services Committees with the DoD. These committees are not required to communicate with one another and are often at cross-purposes for their specific plans and concerns. The State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations was set up, in part, to help coordinate the efforts of these agencies, but it has failed to bring consensus and focus to the interagency.[47] Each of

the 3Ds has its own policy departments, none of which are required to communicate or coordinate with the analogous offices at the other agencies.

The need for national-level leadership and initiative to force comprehensive cooperation, coordination, and collaboration of the interagency, particularly among the 3Ds, in the planning and execution of U.S. Foreign Policy at the national, and regional level, is clearly evident. In an effort to strengthen cooperation with in the interagency and empower the 3D Planning Process, numerous officials have called for Congress to establish a Goldwater-Nichols-type Reform Act for the interagency. Like the watershed legislation of 30 years ago that dramatically changed the DoD, a similar effort for the interagency could completely change the inner workings of the government. Some of the issues could be resolved if current policies and directives were enforced by the President and his staff. The 3D Planning Process should be energized at every level of American Foreign Policy—local, regional, and national—to instill efficiency and effectiveness across the interagency. It is hard to be first among equals, so the President or a senior member of the cabinet must oversee and direct the collaboration of the interagency. Where bureaus and regions can be aligned for better coordination they should be. Policy departments within each agency should have representatives, or liaison officers (LNOs), from each of the other agencies at the regional or bureau level and at the national level to ensure communication, cooperation, and collaboration. We already have an example of how successful this type of human investment can be, the U.S. Special Operations Command and the intricate network of LNOs it has placed across the interagency and at every combatant command.

There are numerous obstacles to achieving the goals and objectives of the 3D planning process. America needs a cohesive foreign policy, not a disjointed series of speeches, directives, articles, and policies written by various elements within the federal government. The United States, a global leader and still the foremost superpower, needs a whole of government approach to our foreign policy. That requires leadership at the top that insists on cooperation, coordination, and collaboration in Diplomacy, Development, and Defense. The President must strengthen current policies and directives in order ensure the synchronization of efforts across the interagency. Finally, the President and Congress should work together to review and revise the operations and processes of the interagency, including a holistic evaluation of bureau and command boundaries, in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our nation's power and influence at all levels.

But none of that will happen without serious, concerted effort at the federal level. As a seasoned, senior DoD official recently explained, "there is no chance of the 3D Planning Process working at the national level. We need a Goldwater-Nichols act at the interagency and must change how approvals and authorities work in the NCR (National Capitol Region)."[48]

Endnotes

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