

CRS Report for Congress

Building an Interagency Cadre of National Security Professionals: Proposals, Recent Experience, and Issues for Congress

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Catherine Dale
Specialist in International Security
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division



**Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress**

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Summary

There is a growing consensus among many national security practitioners and scholars, across the political spectrum, broadly in favor of reforming the interagency system to encourage a more effective application of all elements of national power. The reform debates have included proposals to establish and foster an interagency cadre of national security specialists from all relevant departments and agencies. According to proponents, cadre members, through a long-term career development program that might include education, training, and exchange tours in other agencies, would gain a better understanding of the mandates, capabilities, and cultures of other agencies. They would become better prepared to plan national security missions together in Washington, D.C., and to execute them in the field, and eventually, better able to oversee their own agencies' efforts from leadership positions. As a rule, such proposals have not been aimed solely at creating individual specialists. Rather, just as the Goldwater-Nichols reforms in the Department of Defense (DOD) sought to foster greater "jointness" among the Services, "interagency cadre" proposals have also aimed to adjust the organizational cultures of all agencies with national security responsibilities, in order to make interagency collaboration and integration second nature.

Such recommendations are not new, but they were given a new sense of urgency by recent operational experiences at home and abroad — from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the responses to Hurricane Katrina — which suggested insufficiencies in the abilities of the U.S. government to integrate the various components of its efforts. Reflecting the growing interest, in 2008 on Capitol Hill, several committees, including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Armed Services Committee, have held hearings and sponsored other projects addressing interagency reform, including proposals for fostering closer integration among agencies. Meanwhile, in 2007, the Bush Administration quietly launched an initiative, the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program, aimed at fostering an interagency cadre of national security practitioners. The still-inchoate NSPD program includes a national strategy, an organizational structure, and a pilot educational program, but to date, it has apparently enjoyed very little visibility on the Hill. Lessons learned from the early NSPD efforts could prove valuable for those Members considering the establishment of a permanent legislative requirement for an interagency cadre program.

This report highlights key past proposals for the establishment of an interagency cadre, including their rationales; describes and assesses the emergence and operations to date of the Administration's NSPD program; and raises a series of issues that might help inform congressional debates about a possible permanent interagency cadre requirement. The report will be updated as events warrant.

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Introduction

There is a growing consensus among many national security practitioners and scholars, across the political spectrum, broadly in favor of reforming the interagency system to encourage a more effective application of all elements of national power.¹ The reform debates have included proposals to establish and foster an interagency cadre of national security specialists from all relevant departments and agencies. According to proponents, cadre members, through a long-term career development program that might include education, training, and exchange tours in other agencies, would gain a better understanding of the mandates, capabilities, and cultures of other agencies. They would become better prepared to plan national security missions together in Washington, D.C., and execute them in the field, and eventually, better able to oversee their own agencies' efforts from leadership positions. As a rule, such proposals have not been aimed solely at creating individual specialists. Rather, just as the Goldwater-Nichols reforms in the Department of Defense (DOD) sought to foster greater "jointness" among the Services,² "interagency cadre" proposals have also aimed to adjust the organizational cultures of all agencies with national security responsibilities, in order to make interagency collaboration and integration second nature.

Such recommendations are not new, but they were given a new sense of urgency by recent operational experiences at home and abroad — from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the responses to Hurricane Katrina — which suggested insufficiencies in the abilities of the U.S. government to integrate the various components of its efforts. Reflecting the growing interest, in 2008 on Capitol Hill, several committees, including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Armed Services Committee, have held hearings and sponsored other projects addressing interagency reform, including proposals for fostering closer integration among agencies.³ The

¹ For an overview of the current national security reform debates, see CRS Report RL34455, *Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates*, by Catherine Dale, Nina Serafino, and Pat Towell.

² A major focus of the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-433, and additional subsequent amendments to Title 10, U.S. Code, has been improving the abilities of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines to cooperate closely across Service boundaries.

³ On March 5, 2008, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) held a hearing, (continued...)

debates are likely to receive an additional jumpstart from the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), which intends to put forward a comprehensive set of proposals for interagency reform, including a new draft National Security Act, later this year; reportedly, those recommendations are likely to include the establishment of an interagency cadre.⁴

Meanwhile, in 2007, the Bush Administration quietly launched an initiative, the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program, aimed at fostering an interagency cadre of national security practitioners. The still-inchoate NSPD program includes a national strategy, an organizational structure, and a pilot educational program, but to date, it has apparently enjoyed very little visibility on the Hill. Lessons learned from the early NSPD efforts could prove valuable for those Members considering the establishment of a permanent legislative requirement for an interagency cadre program.

This report highlights key past proposals for the establishment of an interagency cadre, including their rationales; describes and assesses the emergence and operations to date of the Administration's NSPD program; and raises a series of issues that might help inform congressional debates about a possible permanent interagency cadre requirement. The report will be updated as events warrant.

Background

Calls for the development of some form of interagency cadre career development program to help improve interagency integration date back at least to

³ (...continued)

“Strengthening National Security through Smart Power — a Military Perspective,” to explore implications of the report by the Commission on Smart Power, Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., co-chairs, “A Smarter, More Secure America,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2007. On April 24, 2008, the SFRC held a follow-on hearing, “Implementing Smart Power: Setting an Agenda for National Security Reform.” On April 15, 2008, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), held a hearing, “Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process.” In March 2008, the HASC Panel on Roles and Missions released its final report, “Initial Perspectives,” dated January 2008, which included interagency coordination as one of three primary lines of inquiry. On April 17, 2008, following a series of hearings, the HASC Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations released a report, “Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

⁴ PNSR may be the most comprehensive current interagency reform initiative, based on the scope of its aims and the broad membership of its Guiding Coalition and its contributors. PNSR is based at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and partially funded by the Department of Defense, pursuant to the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008*, P.L. 110-181, Section 1049(a), which authorized the Secretary of Defense to contract with an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization for up to \$3 million to conduct a study of the national security interagency system. PNSR Executive Director James Locher III, serving as a Senate Armed Services Committee staffer in the 1980s, directed the development of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. See [<http://www.pnsr.org>].

the immediate aftermath of World War II. They were given fresh impetus by recent operational experiences at home and abroad.

Past Reform Proposals

The largest major contingency of the 20th century, World War II, prompted some calls to use professional development tools to improve the nation's ability to apply all of its critical instruments of power more effectively. In the war's immediate aftermath, the War Department commissioned a study of military officer education, and tasked Army Lieutenant General Leonard Gerow to lead it. In February 1947, the study team issued its findings, including a recommendation for the establishment of a National Security University. The University would bring together and educate practitioners not just from DOD but from all the key security-related agencies — a central tenet of later, more multi-faceted interagency cadre proposals. The University would include the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF, which had already been established), as well as four new schools — a National War College, a joint administrative college, a joint intelligence college, and a Department of State college.⁵ As it turned out, only the National War College (NWC) was established, and in 1976, ICAF and the NWC were brought together under the new National Defense University, designed to pool the intellectual resources of the defense community.

Fifty years later, in the aftermath of the Cold War and during a time of expanding U.S. government involvement in nation-building missions, the National Defense Panel (NDP) recommended the establishment of an interagency cadre based on long-term, multi-faceted career development.⁶ The NDP itself, a “nonpartisan, independent panel,” was established by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 1997 to assess and report on the execution by the Department of Defense of the 1997 quadrennial defense review process.⁷ The NDP recommended creating:

⁵ See John W Yaeger, “Developing National Security Professionals,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 49, 2nd quarter 2008, p.155. Yeager cites Leonard T. Gerow, “Report of War Department Military Education Board on Education System for Officers of the Army,” February 1946, 10, Special Collections, National Defense University Library, Washington DC.

⁶ Earlier that year, in May 1997, the Clinton Administration had issued Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD 56), which also aimed at fostering greater interagency coordination, but with a more immediate operational purpose and a narrower focus. PDD 56 required the National Security Council, working with “appropriate U.S. Government educational institutions,” to “develop and conduct an interagency training program,” with the goal of training mid-level managers in political-military planning for complex contingency operations. Thus, the goal was training current practitioners to do their jobs better, rather than fostering a new professional cadre through long-term career development that might include training as one component. See White House White Paper on Presidential Decision Directive 56, “Managing Complex Contingency Operations,” May 1997, available at [<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm>].

⁷ *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997*, P.L. 104-201, September 23, 1996. Section 924 provides the mandate for the NDP. Section 923 provides the mandate for the quadrennial defense review process that the NDP was to assess.

... an interagency cadre of professionals, including civilian and military officers, whose purpose would be to staff key positions in the national security structures. Such a cadre would be similar in spirit to the “joint” experience envisioned by the 1986 *Goldwater-Nichols Act*. Attention should be given to their education, development, and career development. A certain number of “interagency” slots should be identified within the national security community, including domestic agencies that have foreign affairs responsibilities (e.g. Justice, Commerce, Energy) and staffed by the interagency cadre.

The panel further recommended that to support the new cadre, a national security curriculum should be established, “... combining course work at the National Defense University and National Foreign Affairs Training Center, with a mix of civilian, military, and foreign students to receive training and education in strategic affairs.”⁸

In February 2001, as part of a larger package of proposed national security reforms, the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century (the “Hart-Rudman Commission”) proposed the creation of an interagency cadre called the National Security Service Corps (NSSC) and spelled out its recommendations in detail. The goal would be developing leaders “skilled at producing integrative solutions to U.S. national security policy problems.” The program would include full-spectrum career development, including rotational assignments and professional education, and these experiences would be required in order “to hold certain positions or to be promoted to certain levels.” The scope of “national security” would be broadly defined — participating departments would include “Defense, State, Treasury, Commerce, Justice, Energy, and the new National Homeland Security Agency.” The proposals focused only on civil servants — the military, the intelligence community, and the Foreign Service would be excluded.

To help integrate the efforts by multiple agencies, the Commission recommended the creation of an “interagency advisory group.” The group would ensure that promotion rates for the NSSC were at least comparable to those elsewhere in the Civil Service, and help establish guidelines for rotational assignments and for meeting professional education requirements. Departments would retain control over their own personnel and would continue to make promotion decisions. The Commission believed that specific legislative authority for such an initiative was not necessary.⁹

More recently, the Beyond Goldwater-Nichols project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) made a very similar recommendation, noting their debt to the Hart-Rudman Commission. They proposed and described the creation of a “national security career path that would give career professionals incentives to seek out interagency experience, education, and training.” To the Hart-Rudman proposals, the CSIS team added that to make the program workable for civilian

⁸ National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century*, U.S. Department of Defense, December 1997.

⁹ The United States Commission on National Security/ 21st Century (“Hart-Rudman Commission”), *Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change, Phase III Report*, February 15, 2001, pp. xvi, 101, 102.

agencies, “Congress should approve a 10% float” — additional personnel — to allow participation in training, education, and exchange programs.¹⁰

Recent Lessons Learned

In recent years, the interagency reform debates received a powerful jumpstart from the convergence of “lessons learned” thinking in the homeland security and traditional national security communities, developed to assess operational experiences, respectively, in response to Hurricane Katrina, and in Iraq and Afghanistan. Members of both communities concluded that creating some form of interagency cadre of specialists would help improve coordination in the future. This convergence of thinking gave additional weight to the recommendations, but also introduced a fundamental tension concerning the relative importance of national and homeland security considerations in shaping future interagency coordination initiatives.

Homeland Security: Hurricane Katrina. In February 2006, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Frances Fragos Townsend, submitted to the President the report *Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, which described the state of national preparedness before Katrina’s landfall and assessed the responses in the immediate aftermath. The report highlighted numerous challenges responding organizations faced in trying to coordinate their efforts — for example, communicating with one another effectively given some communications systems that were mutually incompatible and others that were rendered inoperable by natural events. The report made 125 recommendations for change.¹¹ Among those recommendations, the report called for the creation of a “comprehensive program for the professional development and education of the Nation’s homeland security personnel,” with the goal of fostering a “... ‘joint’ Federal Interagency, State, local and civilian team.” The scope of the proposed program would thus be broad, including federal, state, and local officials as well as emergency management persons within the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based and community groups.

Like the Hart-Rudman Commission report, the *Katrina Lessons Learned* report spelled out a de-centralized division of labor between individual agencies and the interagency systemic level. The Office of Personnel Management would establish the professional development program, and individual agencies would implement it.

¹⁰ Clark A. Murdock and Michele Flournoy, Lead Investigators, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era, Phase 2 Report*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005, p. 40. The “10%” figure, frequently cited in discussions of the possible creation of a civilian “float,” was borrowed from the rough percentage used by the military Services. In practice, civilian agencies might require a larger or smaller percentage float, depending on the formats of the education and training programs they adopt, and on how they define backfill requirements.

¹¹ Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, February 2006, pp.119-120, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned.pdf>].

Each participating agency would determine which of its offices plays homeland security roles, and what preparation would be required to support the execution of those responsibilities. Each agency would establish its own professional development program, including “career assignments, education, exercises, and training.” The Department of Homeland Security, in turn, would set up an interagency working group to establish shared goals and standards for measuring individual agency progress.

The *Katrina Lessons Learned* report also called for making both exchange tours in other agencies, and professional education, prerequisites for “senior managerial positions.” It argued that legislation should be considered to support this provision.

National Security: Iraq and Afghanistan, Goldwater-Nichols, and the Quadrennial Defense Review. Meanwhile, operational experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan led many participants and observers to conclude that interagency coordination in the execution of national security activities left much to be desired. Many, particularly senior military officers, suggested that the military’s experiences integrating the Services under the umbrella of “jointness” might be germane. In 2004, then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps General Peter Pace, in a series of public speeches and addresses to DOD war college audiences, suggested that the nation might need a “Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency.” He emphasized the value that “cross-pollination,” trust, and understanding among agencies could have — and the fact that within DOD, the Services “had to be forced” into jointness by legislation.¹²

“Goldwater-Nichols” is a touchstone for the uniformed military — both a watershed event for today’s senior leaders, and a fundamental way of doing business for junior officers — so it is no surprise that it provides a basis of comparison for many, in thinking about possible interagency reform. In common parlance, “Goldwater-Nichols” refers to the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* itself (P.L. 99-433, October 1, 1986), and to the ongoing process of implementing and adapting the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, including follow-on amendments to Title 10, U.S. Code, and updated practices and policies within DOD.

The 1986 *Act* ushered in fundamental defense reorganization, aimed at reducing inter-Service rivalries and fostering greater “jointness” among the Services. The *Act* began by defining what the new concept “joint” meant, thereby bounding the substantive scope of the *Act*. The *Act* stated, “the term ‘joint matters’ means matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, including matters relating to — (1) national military strategy; (2) strategic planning and contingency

¹² General Peter Pace, USMC, Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Extemporaneous Remarks as delivered to the Marine Corps Association/ Naval Institute’s Forum 2004,” September 7, 2004, available at [http://www.jcs.mil/vice_chairman/speeches/MCANavalInstituteFORUM2004.html].

planning; and (3) command and control of combat operations under unified command.”¹³

To achieve greater “jointness,” the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* and related later amendments to Title 10, U.S. Code, created and elaborated a professional development system for “joint specialty officers,” including requirements for both education and joint duty assignments.¹⁴ The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007* made an important revision, amending Title 10, U.S. Code, to establish a four-tiered system of joint qualification that emphasized career-long development and introduced more flexible options for meeting the requirements.¹⁵ As the amended Title 10 now states: “The purpose of establishing such qualification levels is to ensure a systematic, progressive, career-long

¹³ The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-443, §401, amended Title 10, U.S. Code, creating the new §668. The subsequent legislative history of the section suggests the premise that key concepts may evolve over time, in response to the changing global context; and also that crafting clear concepts can be a challenge. The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §519(a), which amended Title 10, U.S. Code §668(a), revised and expanded the definition of ‘joint matters’ to mean: “... matters related to the achievement of unified action by multiple military forces in operations conducted across domains such as land, sea, or air, in space, or in the information environment, including matters relating to (A) national military strategy; (B) strategic planning and contingency planning; (C) command and control of operations under unified command; (D) national security planning with other departments and agencies of the United States; and (E) combined operations with military forces of allied nations. The 2007 NDAA added that in this context, the term ‘multiple military forces’ refers: “... to forces that involve participants from the armed forces and one or more of the following: (A) Other departments and agencies of the United States, (B) The military forces or agencies of other countries, (C) Non-governmental persons or entities.” The new definition increased the list of applicable domains to include space and cyberspace, and the range of activities to include those undertaken with other U.S. government agencies and international partners. The wording of the 2007 NDAA indicated that unified actions by U.S. Services qualify as ‘joint’ only if they are joined by other U.S. agencies, other countries’ militaries, or NGOs — some observers suggest that this caveat may have been unintentional.

¹⁴ The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-443, §401(a), amended Title 10, U.S. Code, by inserting Chapter 38 “Joint Officer Management,” including §661 through §668, which introduced the requirement for both education and experience to earn the joint specialty officer designation. The *Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005*, October 28, 2004, P.L. 108-375, §532(a) elaborated on education requirements by amending Title 10, U.S. Code, adding a new Chapter 107, “Professional Military Education,” §2151-2157. In addition to adding new language, the changes included striking some subsections of the previous Title 10 §663 and transferring others to the new Chapter 107.

¹⁵ The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §516, amending Title 10, U.S. Code §661. The amendment replaced the term “joint specialty officers” with “officers who are joint qualified.” In July 2007, DOD unveiled its revised and renamed Joint Qualification System, reflecting the FY2007 NDAA changes. See joint briefing by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff, “Joint Officer Management: Joint Qualification System (JQS) 101,” July 2007, available at [<http://www.defenselink.mil/briefings/JQS-101-20070707.ppt>].

development of officers in joint matters and to ensure that officers serving as general and flag officers have the requisite experience and education to be highly proficient in joint matters.”¹⁶

To make the new system work, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* and follow-on legislation established links between “jointness” and career progression. In the first place, the legislation took steps to ensure that pursuing “jointness” would have no negative repercussions on individual career advancement, by supporting parity in promotion decisions concerning “joint” officers and their peers.¹⁷

In addition, in order to create a strong incentive for individual participation, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* established joint service as a requirement for promotion to the rank of general or flag officer.¹⁸ The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002* strengthened the requirements for promotion to general or flag officer, to include serving a “full tour” of duty in a joint duty assignment, as well as achieving the “joint specialty” designation.¹⁹

In 2005, the Department of Defense carried out the congressionally mandated quadrennial defense review (QDR) process, which drew on reflections concerning *Goldwater-Nichols* and on lessons learned from recent operational experiences.²⁰

¹⁶ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661(b)(1)(A), as amended by the *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §516(b).

¹⁷ Title 10, U.S. Code, §662, added by the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-443, §401(a), tasked the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the qualifications of officers assigned to joint duty assignments are such that officers serving on the Joint Staff, and officers who have the joint specialty are “promoted at a rate not less than the rate for officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category who are serving on or have served on the headquarters staff of their armed force”; and that officers serving in joint duty assignments are promoted “at a rate not less than for all officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category.” This measure may be seen as protection and support for those officers undertaking joint service, and also as insurance that Services would select well-qualified officers to serve in joint assignments. The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §517, amended Title 10, U.S. Code, §662 to remove the provision concerning promotion of officers with the “joint specialty” and leaving only those provisions concerning promotion rates for those officers serving on the Joint Staff and in joint duty assignments.

¹⁸ The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-443, §404, amended Title 10, U.S. Code, §619 by adding subsection (e), which began: “(1) An officer may not be selected for promotion to the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless the officer has served in a joint duty assignment.” Section 619(e)(2) described conditions under which the Secretary of Defense might waive that requirement. The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994*, November 30, 1993, P.L. 103-160, §931(a) amended Title 10, U.S. Code, Chapter 36, by relocating these provisions from §619 to a new §619a.

¹⁹ The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002*, December 28, 2001, P.L. 107-107, §525(a), which amended Title 10 U.S. Code, §619a(a).

²⁰ The permanent QDR requirement is found in Title 10, U.S. Code, §118, added by the
(continued...)

The *QDR Report* was issued in February 2006, the same month that the *Katrina Lessons Learned* report was released. The *QDR Report* called specifically for an interagency cadre: "... the Department supports the creation of a National Security Officer (NSO) corps — an interagency cadre of senior military and civilian professionals able to effectively integrate and orchestrate the contributions of individual government agencies on behalf of larger national security interests." In putting forward this proposal, the *QDR Report* also specifically invoked the joint duty assignment provisions of Goldwater-Nichols, noting, "Much as the Goldwater-Nichols requirement that senior officers complete a joint duty assignment has contributed to integrating the different cultures of the Military Departments into a more effective joint force, the QDR recommends creating incentives for senior Department and non-Department personnel to develop skills suited to the integrated interagency environment."²¹

The National Security Professional Development Program

In May 2007, as a direct outgrowth of the convergence of national and homeland security "lessons learned," the Bush Administration launched an interagency cadre initiative, the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program.²² Despite apparently broad and long-standing support for the establishment of such a program, NSPD was launched quietly, without much fanfare, and senior officials have seldom spoken about it publicly.²³ The NSPD efforts to date may be instructive for those considering future interagency cadre options.

²⁰ (...continued)

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, October 5, 1999, P.L. 106-65, §901.

²¹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 79, available at [<http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf>].

²² For an overview of the program and supporting documentation, see the NSPD web portal at [<http://www.nspd.gov>]. The acronym is potentially confusing, because during both terms of this Bush Administration, "NSPD" also stands for National Security Presidential Directive.

²³ One exception was a reference by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in January 2008, who, naming the NSPD program as one of a number of recent interagency reforms, mentioned one of its components and described it somewhat incorrectly. He said: "A new executive order on national security professional development encourages Foreign Service officers and civil servants from State as well as the military and other departments to serve tours in other agencies in a way that enhances their career and promotion prospects." NSPD does not include military officers or Foreign Service Officers, see below. See Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Remarks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 26, 2008, available at [<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1211>].

Mandate

The NSPD program has no legislative mandate. It is based exclusively on executive branch guidance, including an executive order issued in May 2007, and the *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals* (“*National Strategy*”), released in July 2007.²⁴ Without some basis in law, the program’s future under the next Administration will depend on the discretion of the new leadership.

According to the executive order, the broad purpose of the NSPD program is “to enhance the national security of the United States, including preventing, protecting against, responding to, and recovering from natural and manmade disasters.” The program aims to achieve such enhancement by providing opportunities in three areas, or “pillars” — education, training, and professional experience — and by linking progress through the program with career opportunities.²⁵

Scope of the Program

Early efforts of the NSPD program included defining the terms “national security” and “national security professional,” and determining to which persons and positions those definitions ought to apply. Reportedly, these fundamental debates about the basic scope of the program have not yet been fully resolved.

The program pointedly defines “national security” to include both “traditional national security and homeland security missions.”²⁶ The *National Strategy* attempted to refine that definition, somewhat circularly, by stating that “national security missions” are those necessary for the implementation of a series of national strategies: “... among others, the *National Defense Strategy*, the *National Drug Control Strategy*, the *National Intelligence Strategy*, the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, the *National Strategy for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Response Plan*, the *National Cyber Security Strategy*, and the *War on Terrorism National Implementation Plan*.”²⁷

Without a crisp definition of “national security” itself, the NSPD program has struggled to clearly define the term “national security professional” (NSP). The NSPD web portal includes this version: “National security professionals are those personnel in positions responsible for developing strategies, creating plans to implement, and executing common missions in direct support of U.S. national

²⁴ Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007, “National Security Professional Development,” available at [http://www.nspd.gov/NSPD_Resources/Documents/order]; and *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, available at [http://www.nspd.gov/NSPD_Resources/Documents/National_Strategy_for_Professional_Development].

²⁵ Executive Order, para.1.

²⁶ See the NSPD web portal, [<http://www.nspd.gov>], and the *National Strategy*, p. 1.

²⁷ *National Strategy*, p. 2.

security objectives.”²⁸ An NSPD “Action List” approved as guidance in March 2008 and posted on the NSPD web portal includes the same definition with one key difference: it begins, “*Federal* national security professionals are those personnel...” As written, this definition leaves open the possibility that there might exist non-federal NSPs, for whom the definition might be different.²⁹ For its part, the *National Strategy* suggests that NSPs are exclusively federal government employees. For example, it notes: “A national security professional development framework must utilize existing and new opportunities to develop Federal Government professionals with the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences necessary for them to carry out their national security responsibilities effectively.”³⁰

The “Action List” names some “additional clarifying criteria for defining national security positions.” In addition to having a role in executing aspects of various national strategies, NSPs, according to the “Action List,” have “significant interaction with other departments, agencies, or government entities”; and “may be called upon in U.S. Government operations or crises.”³¹

In practice, NSPD officials estimate that NSPs will include approximately 20,000 federal government employees, of which about 1,500 will be Senior Executive Service (SES) positions and the rest GS-13s through GS-15s (and their rank equivalents).³² To some officials familiar with the program, these numbers seem low, and they have wondered which positions at the Department of Defense, for example, would not logically fall under the rubric of national security. Others suggest that the relatively low numbers may have a practical explanation — the NSPD program tasks individual departments and agencies to produce lists of their respective NSP positions, but provides no additional resources to support NSP education, training, or other programs, so agencies may have an incentive to lowball the total numbers reported.

From the outset, the NSPD program has specifically excluded three major categories of federal professionals: “Department of Defense military personnel,” the Foreign Service, and the intelligence community.³³ According to NSPD officials,

²⁸ NSPD web portal, [<http://www.nspd.gov>], accessed June 24, 2008.

²⁹ *Emphasis* added. “Action List for Short-Term Implementation,” revised as of 3/14/2008, available at [http://www.nspd.gov/rawmedia_repository/433b656bbafc27bd7a1b91c1bf30b05e7/Action%20List%20for%20Short-Term%20Implementation-3a11aa38b2bdaccdacfe3b3511932494.pdf]. It is possible that the Action List drafters misplaced an adjective and intended to indicate, “National security professionals are those *federal* personnel...” It is also possible that the ambiguity was intentional.

³⁰ *National Strategy*, p. 3.

³¹ “Action List” p.1.

³² NSPD web portal.

³³ Executive Order, para.5. Using the descriptor “DoD” before “military personnel” suggests that the non-DOD military service, the U.S. Coast Guard, could be included. The March 2008 “Action List,” p. 2, added that participation by political appointees is not (continued...)

these exclusions were based in part on the fact that each of these communities maintains its own career development program, which in some fashion incorporate elements of interagency coordination. Some officials from those communities reportedly feared that full participation in the NSPD program might impinge on time and resources available to meet their existing career development requirements. In theory, with agreement from the ESC, any of those communities could seek to make the NSP designation available to its members. In practice, although the practical implications for their career paths have not yet been clarified, some members of these communities have already taken part in some NSPD programs, including a pilot educational program (see below).

Organization and Structure

In general, governance of the NSPD program is characterized by weak central administration and largely decentralized execution. Specific leadership roles, and the relationships among key NSPD bodies, have shifted since the program's inception.

Executive Steering Committee. The May 2007 executive order created an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to provide senior-level oversight of the NSPD program. The executive order specified that the ESC would be chaired by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The ESC's relatively extensive membership, reaching beyond the bounds of those agencies traditionally concerned with national security, includes the Principals or their designees from the Departments of State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, Education, and Homeland Security; and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In practice, according to participants, agency designees tend to be senior human resources professionals.³⁴

The executive order provides that the ESC reports jointly to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. That dual reporting chain — and the dual emphasis in general — may be considered both an innovative strength of the NSPD program, and also, according to some officials, the source of ongoing tensions about the program's focus.

As established by the executive order, the ESC's broad mandate — to “facilitate the implementation of the *National Strategy*” — is relatively weak, and individual agencies are the primary engines of the effort. Agencies craft career development initiatives, and it is the function of the ESC to “coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable, national security professional development programs and guidance issued by the heads of agencies in order to ensure an integrated approach to such

³³ (...continued)
envisaged.

³⁴ For example, the representative for the Office of the Secretary of Defense comes from OSD (Personnel and Readiness). The Joint Staff, which has a separate seat at the table, is represented by the J7, which is responsible for joint force development.

programs.”³⁵ The *National Strategy* elaborates on this theme, arguing that core competencies and requirements differ among agencies, and it states that therefore, the Strategy “does not call for a single human resource or career development standard,” but rather “promotes an integration of national security professional development resources and opportunities.”³⁶

In late 2007, leadership of the ESC shifted — rather abruptly, some observers note — from OPM to OMB, under the personal direction of Deputy Director for Management Clay Johnson. The shift took place after OPM, in accordance with Section 3 of the executive order, met a major milestone by submitting a plan for the implementation of the *National Strategy*. An updated implementation plan is expected by October 1, 2008.

NSPD Integration Office. The NSPD Integration Office (NSPD IO) is a small body formed earlier this year that coordinates NSPD-related activities among agencies, on behalf of the ESC. The NSPD IO is led by retired Army Major General William Navas, Jr., a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, supported by an SES Deputy detailed from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and a handful of staff provided by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. The office has a limited operating budget provided by DOD.

The day-to-day focus of the NSPD IO is coordination rather than execution. With its skeleton staff and limited resources, the office in its current form would not appear to have the capacity for more robust missions. As the NSPD portal describes, the office conveys ESC guidance to the appropriate agencies, monitors implementation, provides coordination among agencies, and reports back to the ESC.

National Security Education and Training Consortium. The NSPD effort is also expected to include a National Security Education and Training Consortium (NSETC), led by a Board of Directors that, like the NSPD IO, reports directly to the ESC. The Consortium itself is to include education and training institutions, public and private, that host NSPD programs.

The Board was established in late spring 2008. It includes representatives from the departments and agencies named as ESC participants in the executive order (see above), and is supported in part by the Education and Training Center at the United

³⁵ Executive Order, Section 3(c).

³⁶ *National Strategy*, p.3. The strategy adds: “It is the responsibility of each Federal department and agency with a role in national security to reform and enhance its professional development programs in conformity with Executive Order 13434 and this Strategy,” p. 4.

States Institute of Peace (USIP).³⁷ The Board has been tasked to nominate Consortium members and establish criteria for its NSPD programs.

Education Pillar

Progress to date in the NSPD education pillar has relied in part on pre-existing initiatives and programs at DOD educational institutions.

Mandate. The NSPD *National Strategy* stated that the federal government would “establish a broad interagency education system.” To that end, rather than create new programs from scratch, the ESC was tasked first to identify existing programs inside and outside government, to synchronize and provide curricula as needed, to enable virtual connectivity, and to consider a wide array of possible formats including short-term programs and distance learning.³⁸

Pre-existing DOD Initiatives. Well before the launch of the NSPD program, DOD, based on lessons learned from recent operational experiences, had begun exploring ways to expand interagency education and training. The 2006 *QDR Report*, borrowing terminology from the 1947 Gerow study (see above), called for the transformation of the National Defense University (NDU), located at Ft. McNair in Washington, D.C., into a “true National Security University.” As the *QDR Report* described it: “... this new institution will be tailored to support the educational needs of the broader U.S. national security profession. Participation from interagency partners will be increased and the curriculum will be reshaped in ways that are consistent with a unified U.S. government approach to national security missions, and greater interagency participation will be encouraged.”³⁹

In response to these plans, Representative Ike Skelton, then-Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, and long a strong proponent of professional military education, wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, urging him not to take a step that might impinge on joint professional

³⁷ USIP has also provided substantial and similar support to the interagency Consortium for Complex Operations (CCO), including a survey of relevant existing training and education programs (“Sharing the Space: A Study on Education and Training for Complex Operations”). The CCO, formally launched on April 28, 2008, and supported by a small, dedicated staff from DOD, is a virtual community of practice, geared toward current educators, and civilian and military practitioners, in the field of complex operations. The CCO defines complex operations as “counterinsurgency; stability, security, transition and reconstruction operations; and irregular warfare.” See the CCO web portal at [<https://www.ccoportal.org/>]. The CCO and NSPD statements of purpose sound similar in some respects, but the programs differ in their fundamental focus: the CCO focuses on improving current and future practice in a specific functional area, while the NSPD — which might usefully draw on the CCO’s efforts — is a much broader, longer-term career development program aimed, like the Goldwater-Nichols process, at changing the ways organizations as well as personnel work together.

³⁸ *National Strategy*, pp. 4-5.

³⁹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 79, available at [<http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf>].

military education (JPME).⁴⁰ General Pace, by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, agreed, and he reportedly gave guidance to make sure that new interagency-focused initiatives would not interfere with the execution of the military's own existing educational requirements.⁴¹

Therefore, instead of transforming itself into a “National Security University,” including new bricks-and-mortar facilities, NDU began exploring options for creating virtual communities with counterpart institutions, including the Foreign Service Institute, and the National Intelligence University. This approach also reportedly eased concerns of some civilian agencies that developing interagency educational programs within DOD facilities might give the program too much of a defense focus.

NDU Pilot Program. After the NSDP executive Order was signed in May 2007, the ground-up NDU-led efforts were subsumed under the NSPD umbrella. While NDU's early efforts to expand interagency education had been guided primarily by educators, under the NSPD umbrella, human resources professionals, responsible in general for establishing competencies to guide educational requirements, assumed the lead role.⁴² The first major initiative was the NSPD education pilot program, hosted by NDU during the 2007-2008 academic year.

NDU hosted the pilot program at three of its schoolhouses — the National War College (NWC) and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) at Ft. McNair, and the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) in Norfolk, Virginia. According to its mission statement, the goal of the pilot program was to produce professionals able to “analyze, at the strategic and operational level, the capabilities, organizational cultures, procedures, and roles of U.S. departments and agencies in the planning and conduct of complex operations in peace, crisis, war and post-conflict overseas and in homeland contingencies.”⁴³

⁴⁰ See Ike Skelton, “Letter to the Honorable Donald L. Rumsfeld,” dated April 4, 2006, Special Collections, National Defense University Library, Washington DC; cited in John W Yaeger, “Developing National Security Professionals,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 49, 2nd quarter 2008, p. 117.

⁴¹ Interviews with DOD officials. For example, interagency education efforts could conceivably impinge on JPME, for example, by taking classroom seats from the military and giving them instead to civilians, or by changing the core curriculum, allowing less time for JPME-focused course work.

⁴² The NSPD program established a working set of competencies — “National Security Professionals Shared Competencies for Interagency Operations” — which are posted on the NSPD web portal and quite general. The list includes strategic thinking; critical and creative thinking; leading and working with interagency teams; collaborating; planning, managing and conducting interagency operations; maintaining global and cultural acuity; mediating and negotiating; and communicating. Some observers have suggested that the competencies — basic desired objectives of the overall program — require further refinement.

⁴³ Joint Staff Briefing (to the Military Education Coordination Council) “National Security Professional Development”, National Defense University, National Security Education Consortium, Pilot Program Update, April 17, 2008. The mission statement is annotated to

(continued...)

A total of 38 students took part — 15 at the NWC, 15 at ICAF, and 8 at the JFSC. Of those, 11 were military officers, including members of the U.S. Coast Guard. Participating civilian agencies included the CIA, and the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and Energy, as well as the Congressional Research Service.⁴⁴ At each institution, NSPD students completed all of the regular core curriculum courses, and then selected their elective courses from special lists.⁴⁵ At the NWC and ICAF, 12 electives were available, including — illustratively — “Intelligence and National Security,” “Homeland Security,” “Stabilization and Reconstruction,” and “Interagency Negotiation.” At the JFSC, available electives included “Case Studies in Interagency and International Operations”; “Homeland Security, Transformation and the War against Terrorism”; “Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance”; and “Just War to Jihad: Ethics in an Age of Uncertainty.”

The pilot program participants, who graduated on June 12, 2008, are to receive a designation in their personnel records that they completed the NSPD education pillar. According to NSPD officials, eligible participants will still be required to complete the training and professional experience pillars, in order to be designated National Security Professionals. The regulations for those pillars have not yet been produced.

“Lessons learned” efforts, including a series of focus groups conducted by NDU, and informal feedback volunteered by students, suggested a few concerns with the pilot program’s execution.⁴⁶ Some observers reportedly commented that it was not obvious how the NSPD educational objectives differed from those of the normal NDU programs. This observation might be considered a vote of confidence in the adaptability of NDU programs in general, which have been revised and updated in recent years to reflect greater concern with interagency issues. At the NWC, for example, after the 2004-2005 academic year, the core curriculum was revised to include a full core course on Non-Military Elements of Strategy.⁴⁷ Some pilot program participants advocated greater flexibility in selecting their elective courses, suggesting that the concept of what is relevant to national security professionals might usefully be expanded. Others reportedly suggested that the NSPD program should be more robust and intensive — for example, it might include additional seminars or discussions, outside the usual coursework, exclusively for NSPD participants, to delve more deeply into key interagency issues and case studies.⁴⁸

⁴³ (...continued)

clarify that analysis at the operational level pertains only to the JFSC program.

⁴⁴ Joint Staff Briefing, April 17, 2008; and interviews with NSPD officials.

⁴⁵ According to officials, the elective courses were selected by NSPD officials from among existing NDU course offerings for their relevance to NSPD concerns.

⁴⁶ Joint Staff Briefing, April 17, 2008, and interviews with NSPD officials.

⁴⁷ A description of the NWC core curriculum is available on the NWC website, at [<http://www.ndu.edu/nwc/index.htm>].

⁴⁸ Joint Staff Briefing, April 17, 2008, and interviews with NSPD officials.

NSPD Education: Next Steps. The NSPD leadership is reportedly considering several basic aspects of the education pillar “way forward.” One question is whether the NDU pilot project will continue during academic year 2008-2009, which begins in early August 2008, and if so, whether it might be expanded to include more participants. Some NDU officials suggest there is no reason not to make the NSPD education track available to all U.S. students in Masters degree-granting programs at NDU.⁴⁹

A second question is whether to expand NSPD educational opportunities to other institutions. Other institutions might include those that directly support other U.S. government agencies, such as the Foreign Service Institute, but could also include focused programs at public or private universities. Some observers report disagreements within the community of government institution educators about what constitutes “education” versus “training,” and which institutions provide each of them.⁵⁰ Some from the DOD community note, for example, that the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute is based at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs *Training* Center (emphasis added) and suggest that its programs more closely resemble skills-training than knowledge-fostering.⁵¹

An additional question is whether to expand NSPD educational opportunities to other formats. Such formats might include distance learning, or programs that convene periodically, such as DOD’s Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP).⁵² To illustrate, ELDP, established in 1985, provides DOD civilians (GS-12 to GS-14) with deep exposure to DOD joint roles and missions. Over the course of 10 months, students — who remain in their current jobs — convene first for two weeks of classroom education, and then monthly for one-week field visits to various DOD commands around the world.

⁴⁹ Interviews with NSPD officials.

⁵⁰ Some practitioners suggest the shorthand, “training teaches you what to do, while education teaches you how to think.” The NSPD *National Strategy* defines the two terms this way: “Education: Opportunities to enhance a person’s capacity for critical and innovative thinking, and level of understanding of authorities, risks, responsibilities, and tools to perform a current or future national security mission successfully. Training: Opportunities to enhance, exercise, or refine a person’s ability to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities in performing national security missions.” See *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, p. 3, available at [http://www.nspd.gov/NSPD_Resources/Documents/National_Strategy_for_Professional_Development].

⁵¹ Interviews with DOD officials.

⁵² For more information, see the DOD Civilian Personnel Management Service website at [http://www.cpms.osd.mil/jlidd/eldp_index.aspx].

Training Pillar

For the second NSPD pillar, the *National Strategy* calls for “... ample training opportunities to refine skills through instruction, drills, and exercises.”⁵³ According to the *Strategy*, the first step — as in the education pillar — is identifying existing training programs, facilities and institutions applicable to the NSPD program. The survey should consider federal programs first, but also state, local, territorial, tribal, academic, non-governmental, and private sector programs. The newly constituted National Security Education and Training Consortium (NSETC, see above) Board of Directors has the responsibility to recommend training as well as educational courses for inclusion in the NSPD program. The *National Strategy* also tasks the ESC to promote existing federal government training consortia concerned with aspects of national security, “in order to promote a sharing of best practices.”⁵⁴

As a whole, the NSPD program acknowledges great variation among the roles and responsibilities of NSPs. The *National Strategy*, for example, recognizes “... the reality that the core competencies needed for each mission area and institution will vary, and therefore professional experience, education, and training programs must be customized in each mission area and institution.”⁵⁵ What the NSPD program’s strategic documents do not directly address is that the variation in requirements might be substantially greater for training than for education. Education in strategic planning, problem-solving, and leadership, for example, might be appropriate for all NSPs. Training requirements, however, are typically much more specific, focused on mastering tasks to be executed during contingencies, including any specific requirements for coordination with colleagues in other agencies, and thus might vary significantly among NSPs.⁵⁶

The most concrete effort so far under the NSPD training pillar is the establishment, required by the March 2008 “Action List,” of a federal training orientation course for holders of all designated NSP positions. According to NSPD

⁵³ *National Strategy*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *National Strategy*, p. 7. One example would be the Consortium for Complex Operations (CCO, see above). See the CCO web portal at <https://www.ccoportal.org>.

⁵⁵ *National Strategy*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ The descriptions of training in the *National Strategy* reflect the difficulty of expressing succinctly the full range of all forms of interagency training required by all NSPs. For example, the *Strategy* states, p. 8: “A successful training program must ensure that Federal, State, local, and tribal government leaders are cognizant of their preparedness roles and responsibilities, trained in carrying out their assigned functions, and prepared to be immediately effective in interagency, inter-governmental, and international emergency operations.” To some observers, that emphasis on other levels of government, “preparedness,” and “emergency operations” sounds like an only slightly modified description of homeland security training concerns, that excludes such interagency national security activities as steady-state diplomacy and security cooperation.

officials, the purpose of the course is not to create instant experts, but rather to introduce participants to the full spectrum of NSPD agencies and concerns.⁵⁷

To date, the effort is bifurcated between the “traditional national” and homeland security foci of the NSPD program. On February 4, 2008, the Emergency Management Institute of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), part of the Department of Homeland Security, unveiled an online, three-hour orientation course entitled, “National Response Framework: An Introduction.” The course outline states that material covered includes the Framework’s purpose, response doctrine, the roles and responsibilities of participating entities, and multi-agency coordination. The course is intended for “... government executives, private-sector and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders, and emergency management practitioners.”⁵⁸ The NSPD federal training orientation will, at least initially, have two parts — the FEMA course to cover homeland security, and a national security-focused course, currently under development. Some officials note that this dual-track approach to orientation misses a key opportunity to underscore and elaborate on a fundamental premise of the NSPD program — that, as the *National Strategy* states: “The Nation cannot view the missions of national security and homeland security as separate and distinct.”⁵⁹

Experience Pillar

The May 2007 executive order established the “professional experience” pillar of the NSPD program. The *National Strategy* spelled out tasks to be undertaken to support that pillar, including designating certain activities as “interagency duty assignments,” developing a “formal mechanism” for rotational and temporary detail assignments, and linking career advancement to participation in such assignments.⁶⁰

The *Strategy* explicitly assigned these responsibilities to the “relevant departments and agencies.” The role of the ESC would be simply to “coordinate the completion” of the tasks.⁶¹ This highly de-centralized division of labor was reinforced by the March 2008 “Action List,” which tasked individual agencies to develop the “criteria for acceptable mission-related experiences that are appropriate for their NSP positions”; to identify positions available for rotational opportunities; and, “to the extent permitted by law,” to draft regulations “designed to create rules stipulating that candidates for SES positions (or other equivalent senior-level federal executive positions) for identified national security positions across the Federal

⁵⁷ Interviews with NSPD officials.

⁵⁸ See [<http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is800b.asp>]. The course slide show begins at [<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS800B/index.htm>].

⁵⁹ *National Strategy*, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *National Strategy*, p. 9.

⁶¹ *National Strategy*, p. 8.

government must have documented rotational or interagency national security professional experience.”⁶²

This approach stands in some contrast to that of DOD’s joint officer management program, which enjoys stronger oversight from the systemic — DOD — level. The Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is tasked to establish different levels of joint qualification, including education and joint experience criteria,⁶³ to determine the number of officers who are joint qualified,⁶⁴ and to establish career guidelines for officers to achieve joint qualification and for officers who have been so designated, including guidelines for selection, education, training and types of duty assignments.⁶⁵ Further, the requirement of joint duty service and joint qualification as prerequisites for promotion to general or flag officer are stipulated by law, not left to the discretion of Service rules or regulations.⁶⁶

Issues for Congress

Members of Congress weighing the merits of various proposals for national security reform for the interagency, including possible options for an interagency cadre professional development program, may wish to consider the following points.

Possible Roles for Congress

Congress could help direct or shape a future interagency cadre career development program either through legislation, oversight, or both.

Legislation. The current NSPD program, which has no legislative mandate, would continue under a new administration only at the discretion of that new leadership team. Many current officials and observers contend that legislation would be necessary to ensure the success of any interagency career development program, particularly because by definition, career development requires a long-term, administration-spanning perspective. Without the assurance that a program would continue into the future, individuals might be less likely to risk the investment of their time, and agencies might be less likely to risk the investment of their resources.⁶⁷ Numerous senior military officers and defense observers, including General Pace, have asserted that the Goldwater-Nichols reforms would not have been possible without legislation.

⁶² “Action List,” pp. 4-5.

⁶³ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661(b)(1)(A).

⁶⁴ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661(b)(1)(B).

⁶⁵ Title 10, U.S. Code §661(e).

⁶⁶ Title 10 U.S. Code, §619a(a), and see above.

⁶⁷ Interviews with officials, and see for example Jeffrey D. McCausland, “Developing Strategic Leaders for the 21st Century,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2008.

Some observers and practitioners suggest that the most important factor in ensuring full agency participation and commitment to interagency career development is presidential support — including regularly emphasizing the program as a priority, and providing ongoing oversight from the White House. In theory, legislation and presidential emphasis are not mutually exclusive. Little empirical evidence is available concerning their relative importance, because the single empirical test case to date, the NSPD program, is not supported by legislation.

Oversight. Whether or not legislation is enacted, Congress has the option of exercising oversight over any future executive branch interagency career development program for national security professionals. Some observers have wondered how Congress might best exercise such oversight, given that such a program would be likely to involve multiple agencies, including some without traditional national security responsibilities such as the Departments of Justice and Commerce.

One option would be oversight of program implementation in individual agencies by their respective committees of jurisdiction. This approach might help ensure such agencies' individual compliance, but it would not provide an assessment of the program's overall impact or the consistency of its application.

Another option might be oversight by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform. These committees have oversight responsibility for executive branch organization and the federal civil service, although they neither authorize nor appropriate.

In the broader debates concerning national security reform for the interagency, some participants have suggested yet another option — the creation of House and Senate Select Committees on National Security, which would have oversight responsibility for holistic issues and initiatives that cross agency boundaries.⁶⁸ Such bodies might be well-placed to provide oversight of an interagency cadre program, although such a restructuring might be difficult to achieve.

Program Policy Issues

The experiences of the NSPD program to date, and some aspects of the Goldwater-Nichols process, suggest a series of policy questions that could help shape any future interagency cadre program.

Scope. According to officials involved with the NSPD program, it has been difficult to achieve consensus on the program's scope. While many options, with various pros and cons, are theoretically possible, any new or adapted interagency cadre program would benefit from clearly established parameters.

⁶⁸ See CRS Report RL34455, *Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates*, by Catherine Dale, Nina Serafino, and Pat Towell.

One issue is the substantive focus — and in particular, the balance between homeland and traditional national security concerns. There is a broad consensus in the Washington policy community that the two categories are related. As many observers have noted, it is difficult to draw a clear line between them, because providing security for the homeland may require addressing challenges that arise abroad. But there is also recognition in practitioner communities that not all aspects of “national security” broadly defined are related to all others. Too broad a reach — or too broad a reach with too-uniform implementation policies and procedures — could produce in some cases unneeded professional development activities, with attendant waste in time and resources.

A second issue is the “horizontal” scope of agency participation. At the federal level, the NSPD executive order mandates very broad participation by federal entities, including many without traditional national security concerns — such as the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Education.⁶⁹ Officials involved with the NSPD program note that though such agencies’ extent of involvement is much less than that of DOD or the State Department, for example, ensuring their full participation is actually more of a challenge, because as a rule, national security is a relatively small part of their focus. The benefits of casting a wide net at the federal level include incorporating those entities with singular, needed expertise. The potential drawbacks include possible disproportionate administrative burdens on non-traditional national security agencies, and providing comprehensive congressional oversight of all participating agencies.

A related issue is the “vertical” scope of agency participation, that is, the layers of government — federal, state, local, territorial, and/or tribal — to which the program applies. Most indications suggest that the NSPD leadership has chosen to focus the program at the federal level, although both program documents and participant accounts make clear that the NSPs’ ability to work smoothly with counterparts from other layers of government is a key program goal. The *Katrina Lessons Learned* report envisaged a professional development program that would include federal, state, and local officials and other civilian first responders,⁷⁰ and that multi-layer approach to building a cadre reportedly continues to find favor within the homeland security community.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007, National Security Professional Development, Section 3(b), and see above.

⁷⁰ *Katrina Lessons Learned*, pp. 119-120.

⁷¹ Interviews with NSPD officials. One additional aspect, germane to both the homeland and traditional national security communities, is the role of contractors. Observers generally support integrating contractors into preparations for contingencies at home and abroad — both training programs and exercises — given that integrated efforts by government employees and contractors are required during actual contingencies. “Interagency cadre” programs differ in their focus on long-term professional development, and they require, by definition, that the program authorities are empowered to make career decisions concerning participants. While any such program may set “ability to integrate efforts with those by contractors” as a program goal, and might include contractors in various program activities, (continued...)

Nature of “Integration”. It is common for interagency reform proponents to call for closer integration among departments and agencies, but integration can mean a range of different things in practice. At one end of the spectrum, members of different agencies view themselves primarily or exclusively as representatives of their home agencies, but are familiar with the work of other agencies and able to work with counterparts in them — this may facilitate an integrated application of their respective capabilities. At the other end of the spectrum, members of different agencies view themselves primarily as part of a common, completely integrated enterprise at the systemic level, though they are still able to reach back into their home agencies for resources and support. Neither end of the spectrum necessarily corresponds to greater effectiveness, but the nature of the integration desired may shape program requirements in terms of education, training, and rotational opportunities.

For the sake of comparison, some observers have suggested that due to Goldwater-Nichols, designed to foster a shared joint culture among the Services, all officers are now purple,⁷² but that may be true only up to a point. In general, while joint qualification has, by most accounts, provided valuable familiarity with other Services, it does not appear to have replaced the primary cultural association with an officer’s own Service. Arguably, a servicemember, if asked, is still far more likely to identify himself or herself as a Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine, than as a generic member of the armed forces.

Responses to recent efforts by the Department of State, under the rubric of Secretary Rice’s transformational diplomacy initiative, to collaborate more closely with the U.S. military, suggest additional possible constraints on complete integration. In a June 2008 OpEd piece in the *Washington Post*, a serving Foreign Service Officer voiced concern about possible unintended consequences of State Department efforts to integrate more seamlessly with the military, including sidelining the Department’s focus on traditional diplomacy. He argued, “Developing a Foreign Service wise in the ways of nation-building should not come at the expense of its core capabilities — above all, its unrivaled language, area and cultural expertise.”⁷³

Program Objectives. Although it may sound obvious, a new or updated interagency cadre program would benefit from a clearly articulated statement of purpose, including how it differs from or complements related efforts. In particular, a statement of purpose might suggest the relative emphasis on long-term career development, versus shorter-term preparation for participation in interagency national security activities. It might describe the relative concern with cultivating field practitioners for current missions versus fostering and mentoring future senior leaders

⁷¹ (...continued)

the government career-development program could not, at its own initiative, formally include contractors as participants.

⁷² “Purple” is a shorthand for “joint” — a color that might result from mixing together all the colors used by all the Services, or at the very least, a color not directly associated with any single Service.

⁷³ James P. DeHart, “Suited for the New Diplomacy?” *Washington Post*, June 15, 2008.

with an “interagency” perspective. It might address the relative weight of changing institutional cultures versus changing individual practices. All of these objectives are mutually compatible, but how their relative importance is defined might have an impact on the structure of a career development program and on how it leverages or supports other programs aimed at interagency integration.

To illustrate, the Goldwater-Nichols process explicitly focuses on long-term career development of joint-qualified officers. As part of the qualification process, such officers generally serve tours as joint practitioners, so in practice the program does support current operations. But the long-term objective is fostering joint-qualified senior leaders, who will bring a deeply “joint” perspective to their leadership activities in their home Services. The more fundamental objective of Goldwater-Nichols has been to transform Service cultures, augmenting them — though not replacing them — with joint perspectives.

The current NSPD program also focuses primarily on long-term career development, designed to produce “interagency-qualified” professionals, able to work smoothly at the systemic level, who will bring those perspectives back to senior leadership roles in their home agencies. NSPD shares some substantive concerns — in particular, the focus on integration — with current initiatives designed to increase and better integrate civilian capacities for various complex contingencies. The overlap is most evident in the realm of training initiatives designed to prepare current practitioners for potential near-term execution roles.⁷⁴

The division of labor is arguably clearer between NSPD and initiatives focused on actual planning and execution, such as the work of the Office for the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (“S/CRS”),⁷⁵ established at the Department of State in 2004, and the Interagency Management System (IMS) created in March 2007.⁷⁶ The conceptual difference is like the distinction, in DOD, between

⁷⁴ For example, both the NSPD program and the Consortium for Complex Operations (CCO, see above, and web portal at [<https://www.ccoportal.org>]) are mandated to identify and help develop interagency training programs.

⁷⁵ “CRS” is an acronym, and “S” denotes that the office reports to the Secretary of State. S/CRS was established in 2004 and codified the following year by National Security Presidential Directive 44, December 7, 2005, “Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization,” available at [<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.pdf>], which assigned the Secretary of State the responsibility to “coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.” The scope of those activities is defined this way: “The relevant situations include complex emergencies and transitions, failing states, failed states, and environments across the spectrum of conflict, particularly those involving transitions from peacekeeping and other military interventions.” Per the Directive, S/CRS supports the Secretary of State in carrying out these responsibilities. For background and analysis, see CRS Report RL32862, *Peacekeeping and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on Civilian Capabilities*, by Nina Serafino and Martin Weiss.

⁷⁶ The Interagency Management System, established in March 2007, is designed to manage
(continued...)

developing and employing the force. Services are responsible for building (organizing, manning, training, and equipping) a joint force, with oversight from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, while Combatant Commands put those forces to use. Similarly, the NSPD program is tasked with the long-term development of “interagency-qualified” personnel, some of whom may be employed by IMS, S/CRS, or other organizations, during contingencies.

Integration Function. A new or adapted interagency cadre program might also address how strong the systemic-level integration function ought to be, to support the program’s success. The current NSPD program is quite de-centralized. The systemic-level structure — the ESC and its supporting Integration Office — control no resources and serve primarily, by mandate, to coordinate agency programs, practices, and promotion policies.

In the Goldwater-Nichols process, Services are still the engines for execution, but the systemic-level integration function is much more powerful than it is in NSPD. The Secretary of Defense, responsible for oversight with advice from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), establishes the levels of joint qualification, determines the number of joint qualified officers, and establishes joint qualification career guidelines.⁷⁷ The Secretary also controls the submission of the overall DOD budget request.

While a reasonably robust integration function would seem to have some advantages in terms of forcing the system to work, some observers offer a caveat: detailed legislative prescriptions concerning program structure and organization can limit flexibility — in particular, the opportunity, in the early days, to experiment to find the most effective organizational arrangements. One alternative way for Congress to help ensure that the system functions, without being overly prescriptive, is through robust and regular reporting requirements.

Resources. Congress may wish to consider what resources would be required to support any new or updated interagency cadre program. The current NSPD

⁷⁶ (...continued)

implementation of interagency reconstruction and stabilization efforts — to “employ the interagency force” — in response to crises. The System includes three interagency components — a Washington-based Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group at the Assistant Secretary-level, supported by a Secretariat provided by S/CRS; an Integration Planning Cell to deploy to the relevant Combatant Command or other military headquarters; and an Advanced Civilian Team to deploy in support of the Chief of Mission (or to help establish a U.S. diplomatic presence). In theory, such a system might employ “interagency-qualified” professionals as senior leaders and field practitioners. See Ambassador John Herbst, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, Prepared Statement for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, House Armed Services Committee, October 30, 2007, available at [<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/rm/94379.htm>]. The IMS organizational structure draws in part on the “Executive Committee” (ExCom) structure described by the 1997 Presidential Decision Directive 56. See White House white paper on Presidential Decision Directive 56, “Managing Complex Contingency Operations,” May 1997, available at [<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm>].

⁷⁷ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661.

program has been supported, to date, “out of hide” — that is, through agency re-prioritization, without any additional funding. Additional resources could conceivably be required to support new or expanded education and training programs, including faculty and staff, facilities, curriculum-development, and/or tuition at non-government institutions. Resources could also be required to support a centralized “integration function” secretariat that coordinates and integrates program efforts. The single greatest cost could be the funding required to create a personnel “float” in civilian agencies, to backfill positions while personnel participate in education programs, training, or rotational tours in other agencies. Many observers have suggested that without such a float, the ability of civilian agencies to participate in an interagency cadre program would be quite limited.⁷⁸

Personnel System Incentives. Observers have suggested that in order to ensure full participation, an interagency cadre system would need to provide incentives for individuals to participate. Those might include enhanced promotion potential; improved prospects for choice assignments; and a reasonable degree of confidence that the program rules, the basis for career decision-making, will not change too dramatically over time.

One of the key elements of the Goldwater-Nichols process is the linkage between jointness and promotion to flag rank.⁷⁹ In a public address in 2004, General Pace suggested that the officer corps got the message: “Congress said, if you want to get promoted, you’ve got to be joint. I was a Lieutenant Colonel in 1986. I said, ‘I want to get promoted! What is joint, and how do I get some?’”⁸⁰ The NDAA for FY2007, which fundamentally revised the program and changed the nomenclature from “joint specialty” to “joint qualification,” also took care to protect those officers who had achieved a joint designation under the old system — those who already had the joint specialty, or had been selected for it, would simply be considered joint qualified.⁸¹

Under the Goldwater-Nichols process in DOD, Services maintain jurisdiction for individual promotion decisions. But legislation ensures jointness prerequisites for promotion to flag officer, and the Secretary of Defense, with advice from CJCS, plays an oversight role, strengthened by reporting requirements to Congress, helping ensure that overall promotion rates support jointness. In the NSPD program, Departments and agencies retain full jurisdiction over individual promotion decisions, with neither legislation nor a systemic-level mechanism to help ensure that

⁷⁸ See for example Commission on Smart Power, Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Co-Chairs, “A Smarter, More Secure America,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007, p.66.

⁷⁹ Title 10 U.S. Code, §619a(a), and see above.

⁸⁰ General Peter Pace, USMC, Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Extemporaneous Remarks as delivered to the Marine Corps Association/ Naval Institute’s Forum 2004,” September 7, 2004, available at [http://www.jcs.mil/vice_chairman/speeches/MCANavalInstituteFORUM2004.html].

⁸¹ The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §516(g).

“interagency qualification” is given due consideration in the agencies’ promotion decision-making processes.

Recruiting. Some observers argue that a comprehensive program to build an interagency cadre might also consider fostering recruitment policies that support the program’s goals.⁸² One possible approach would be further developing programs at the college-level, including support for national security studies and opportunities for internships in national security fields. Another possible recruitment approach would be allowing greater flexibility for mid-career recruitment of specialists from outside the government, and for transfers in and out of government jobs including incentives for valuable experience gained. The *National Strategy* tasks departments and agencies to “reform employment practices to encourage the hiring of personnel with a variety of experiences from within and outside the Federal Government,” but that intent is not reflected in the March 2008 “Action List,” and little action seems to have been taken on that front.⁸³

⁸² See for example Jeffrey D. McCausland, “Developing Strategic Leaders for the 21st Century,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2008.

⁸³ *National Strategy*, p. 9.