

PROJECT ON NATIONAL SECURITY REFORM STRUCTURES WORKING GROUP



Department of International Relations

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Introduction/Description

The current Department of State can no longer effectively manage the nation's increasingly diverse foreign relations responsibilities in an increasingly globalized world. Currently, twenty-seven agencies have formal representation overseas yet there is no way to ensure that the "message" we are sending is both unified and consistent with overall foreign policy priorities and objectives.¹ As a result, we see an increased US presence abroad but we are still struggling to implement a unified foreign policy that is relevant to the security concerns of today.

Yet no adequate integrating authority exists in the USG. Only in the White House and in the individual Country Teams of American Embassies are these programs considered as a total package. Even then, limitations on presidential span of control and attention make any oversight sporadic and incomplete, and the *de facto* authority of the Chief of Mission within US Embassies is too limited to ensure even tactical integration.

As a result, we continue to act as a crowd of independent agencies, and nowhere is this more true than in our attempts to manage the multiplicity of civilian agency programs – so-called soft power - overseas. These programs – from economic relations to development assistance, humanitarian relief, diplomatic presence, public broadcasting, migration, human rights, political-military engagement, arms control, and educational exchanges, and many others - are fractured and spread across many agencies and bureaus. For instance, the failure to pass a foreign aid authorization bill for over 20 years means that the government is saddled by a cumbersome law that has a bewildering array of 33 goals, 75 priority areas, and 247 directives

¹ George L. Argyros, Marc Grossman, Felix G. Rohatyn, and Anne Witkowsky. *The Embassy of the Future*. Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2007

The effective integration of a large number of even closely related substantive programs currently administered under disparate authorities and organizations – stovepipes in the current vernacular – is a daunting challenge. How to do so is a major consideration of the PNSR project. One approach in the past has been to consolidate programs, usually by folding a given program into an existing department or agency. Many of these efforts involving consolidating bureaucratic organizations have had mixed success at best, as the history of attempting to fold other agencies or programs into the existing Department of State shows, e.g. the failed integration of USIA.

The proposal to consolidate the majority of soft power international programs of the USG is a more ambitious scheme. Successful integration of important foreign policy components on this scale requires a new department with a new institutional culture. All or most soft power components of international relations would be combined in a new and more expansive “Department of International Relations”, structured as a comprehensive, mission oriented department, with the broader mission being the integrated conduct of the Republic’s foreign relations.

The new department, called tentatively the Department of International Relations (DIR) would consolidate the majority of foreign affairs programs in order to better integrate the various elements of U.S. foreign policy. The new department would consolidate both the traditional tools of foreign relations (political diplomacy, public diplomacy, economic relations, development aid, etc.) with the international components of various agencies that deploy representatives overseas to carry out relations with other countries.

The organizational strategy would consist of four elements:

- a) A “family” of core sub- departments or bureaus, each representing a distinct foreign relations instrument: bilateral diplomacy, public diplomacy, development assistance, economic relations, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics, migration and immigration, political-military engagement, etc.
- b) A coherent chain of command from Secretary, through Regional Under-Secretaries, to Office Directors to Chiefs of Mission to provide integrated management of all field operations, global to country specific – each level operating under authority analogous to current “Chief of Mission” authority.
- c) A strong “hub” of foreign relations oversight and management so that appropriate and necessary networking can take place between programs within the expanded stovepipe of DIR and with other departments which have an interest in foreign relations in addition to or as part of their core mission.
- d) An expanded “foreign affairs” culture fostered by a two-pronged approach: first by expanding the current Foreign Service of the United States to cover all personnel who pursue international careers regardless of substantive discipline; secondly by instituting an extensive formal program of inter-agency assignments.

Two major “macro” results are envisaged for this consolidation and departmental recreation. A Secretary for International Relations authorized to coordinate the entire international relations mechanism abroad would be in a position to better implement presidential policy by ensuring that the various programs marched to a single drum. Such a Secretary would dispose of a broad enough mandate, a rich enough portfolio, and a greater resource base would benefit from an enhanced international status with which to extend U.S. influence abroad and to hold his/her own in the upper levels of U.S. governmental competition.

Secondly, creating a new, differently structured Department of International Relations which consolidates related programs would also help correct the imbalance between the military and civilian elements of national power. This imbalance is not due to a disparity in resources but a disparity in authority. To correct the imbalance, the Department of International Foreign Relations will consolidate a critical mass of soft power tools of statecraft under one organization.²

There is a great deal of precedence for this approach. The Department of Defense is the oldest and most successful model, although the newer Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence are more recent efforts. The idea is to bundle together related authorities and resources in order to provide for effective executive authority below the White House and to obtain greater unity of effort and unity of purpose among related programs. Like the concept of jointness that revolutionized American defense capabilities after the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the new DFR would draw upon a combination of directive authority and procedural, human capital and cultural changes.

Strategic Direction/Organizational Strategy

Breaking up and reconstituting bureaucratic organizations is extraordinarily difficult. Achieving the required structural reforms cannot be done by merely folding other agencies or programs into the existing Department of State. The failed integration of USIA exemplifies the problems with that approach. USIA was reconstituted under a department with its own unique culture, structure, management style, and mission, one that was often at odds with USIA’s previously existing culture, structure, and management. The resistance within USAID to full integration under the State Department, despite their close relationship and common budgetary authority, is also directly related to differences in culture, structure, management and mission.

The complete integration of important foreign policy components requires a new department with a new institutional culture. The organizational structure of the current Department of State, which revolves around traditional diplomacy, exacerbates rather than alleviates the integration problem. Instead of managing international affairs under the auspices of the current Department of State, all soft power components of international relations should be combined in a new, more expansive, and more ambitious “Department of International Relations.” The process should not be viewed as the

² See the Appendix for descriptions of core agencies

traditional shuffling of units and tasks but rather a complete restructuring designed to produce a comprehensive, mission oriented department, with the broader mission being the integrated conduct of the Republic's foreign relations.

While the bureaucratic restructuring proposed will indeed be a major legal and organization exercise, it should be noted that the programs and activities considered actually do constitute a community of "related activities" – the world of "soft power" – even if it does lack bureaucratic unity and unity of management. Transforming that "community" into an effective, coherent instrument of national governance would contribute to greater overall coherence in the national security realm. Joining DOD, DHS, and the intelligence community, these four disciplines (Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Homeland Security) would provide the President with a core national security establishment that is more coherent and manageable.

Structure:

The new Department of International Relations would consist of three organizational structures:

I. A central management or operational core, headed by the Secretary: The Secretary of Foreign Relations would need to be supported by a Deputy Secretary and a well-staffed "Office of the Secretary" to manage span of control and to provide overall policy supervision and coordination. In addition there would be a need to house some system wide functions such as Policy Planning, a General Counsel, Comptroller and Central Budget Office, Bureau of Intelligence & Research, and a central personnel department with a Department wide training and educational system.

II. An operational chain of command to manage field operations would be created running from the Secretary through Regional Under-Secretaries (or Integrated Regional Divisions) to Chiefs of Mission. This clear "chain of command" – President, Secretary, and Regional Under-Secretaries – would replicate at each level the authority and role that Chiefs of Mission are responsible for exercising in their Country Teams.

The Chief of Mission's position vis-à-vis the rest of the country team depends not only on presidential letters but also on statute. specifically 22 USC 3927 which provides in Title 22, Chapter 52, Subchapter II, Section 3927 that:

(a) "Under the direction of the President, the chief of mission to a foreign country –

(1) shall have full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all Government executive branch employees in that country (except for Voice of America correspondents on official assignment and employees under the command of a United States area military commander); and

(2) shall keep fully and currently informed with respect to all activities and operations of the Government within that country, and shall insure that all

Government executive branch employees in that country (except for Voice of America correspondents on official assignment and employees under the command of a United States area military commander) comply fully with all applicable directives of the chief of mission.

A similar delegation of authority to the appropriate management levels of the DIR should be provided. With this authority, the DIR could provide for integrated management and direction of all USG civilian and political-military international operations. Through this central “command” structure in DIR, policy and resources are integrated and coordinated at the policy level and then flow down to Country Teams, rather than going directly through discrete bureaucratic and authority stovepipes, thereby alleviating if not eliminating the current organizational competition at the country level

III A collection of major sub-cabinet departments (bureaus or divisions, similar in status and role to the Departments of Army, Navy, Air Force and the military services of the Department of Defense) would constitute the substantive core of the department. These subject focused organizations would group the bureaucratic entities relevant to specific foreign affairs subjects but now spread around distinct departments/agencies, such as economic development or transnational threats, and would be headed by Presidentially appointed officials at the Deputy Secretary level.

In essence, we are proposing to deconstruct State and join the various component parts with similar bureaucratic units across government whose primary missions are also in the foreign relations field and consolidate them into a new department. The objective would be to construct an “omnibus” type of department; one with a greater range of substantive programs than, for instance, the Department of Defense but less than the Department of Homeland Security. Constructing this department, what to include, will be difficult, requiring thoughtful analysis, lengthy negotiation, and firm decisions. The following general guidelines are proposed:

- 1) Fully integrated will be those programs and agencies whose core mission is in the conduct of an aspect of foreign affairs. This will include, obviously, all the present activities of the Department of State, USAID, and agencies such as USTR and OPIC.
- 2) Transferred and also fully integrated would be programs not presently constituting separate agencies but are reasonably self-contained foreign affairs programs or services of departments, such as the Agriculture and Commercial Foreign Services from the Department of Agriculture and Commerce and their supporting offices, ICITAP from Justice, and elements of the Office of the Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy (the infamous “Little State department”).
- 3) A third component would be foreign relations programs which are conducted by departments and agencies as part of their core missions but not identified as freestanding programs. These programs – as extensions of their parent agencies – will be integrated as partners through representation in DIR staffs, empowered multi-agency teams, and extensive networking.

The organizational theme of the DIR is analogous to the concept of the Country Team, but raised to the Cabinet Department level.

- 1) The substantive bureaus or divisions would be organized around a major foreign relations theme such as economic and trade relations, economic development, public diplomacy and information, political-military engagement, migration and immigration, the nexus of transnational threats (terrorism, narcotics, international crime. These divisions would be headed at the Deputy Secretary level and would function as the major policy developers and capability providers to the operational chain of command. In essence, the whole Department would be organized as a multi-agency “National Team” where policy and resource integration would take place at three formal levels (in addition to informal coordination at all levels): at the Secretarial or Cabinet level, at the Regional Under-Secretary Level, and at the Country Team level. (Also for emergencies, in special teams or missions.)

Other departments and agencies would participate in DIR at all of these levels just as they do now in Country Teams: by joining these “teams” and contributing to policy determination, personnel, and resources. With this approach, other departments and agencies will no longer be visitors or invitees to “interagency meetings”, but more like partners in a common organization.

By combining these programs into a single department, a number of existing stovepipes would be consolidated. This would not resolve the overall integration problem for the national security system but it would simplify it by providing effective delegated presidential authority over a significant number of government activities. This consolidation would improve communication both at the executive, departmental and country team level.

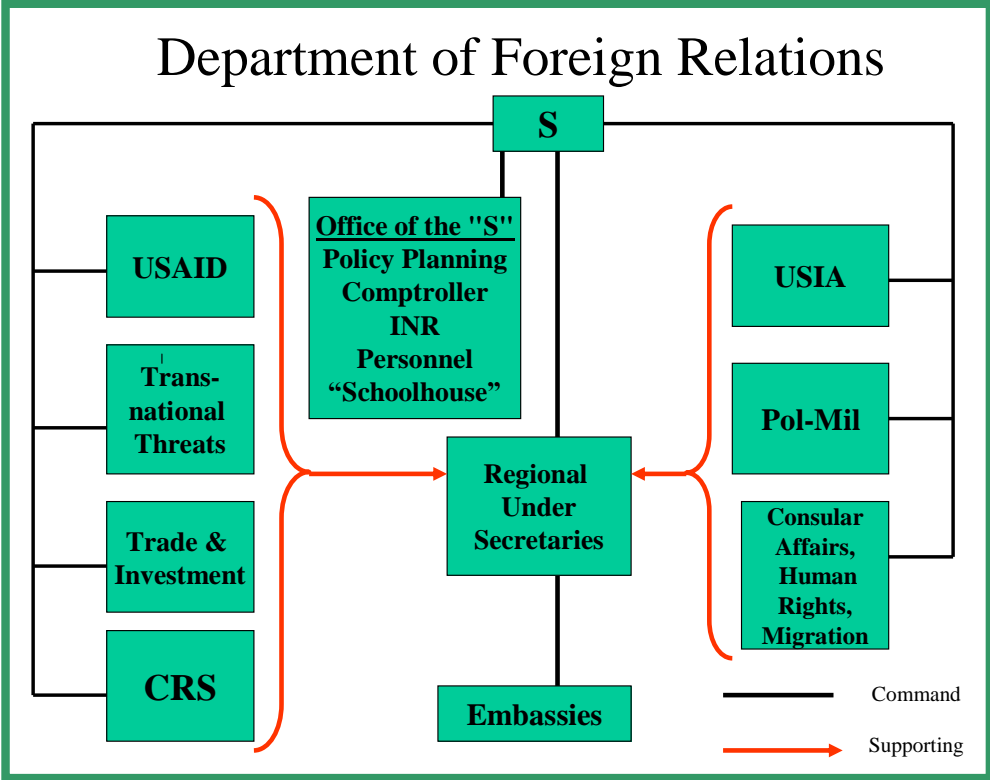
The purpose of DIR is not to take the policy formulation and expertise out of parent organizations, but to facilitate the administration of other agency programs at home and abroad. The following notional and incomplete list of programs and administrations to be included in the Department of Foreign Relations indicate the concept of consolidation envisioned:

- 1) Fully integrated agencies and offices, e.g.:
 - a. Office of Trade and Investment: US Trade Representative; US Trade and Development Agency; Overseas Private Investment Corporation; International Trade Administration; Foreign Agriculture Service, Department of Agriculture; Foreign Commercial Service. Department of Commerce,
 - b. Office of Public Diplomacy: reconstituted USIA.
 - c. Office of Transnational Threats: The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Office of the Coordinator for Combating Terrorism, the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Legal Attaché office of the FBI, the ICITAP program from Justice, and the

anti-narcotic JIATFs, Bilateral Investigations Office of the Department of Justice.

- d. Office of International Aid and Development: USAID, African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, Millennium Challenge Corporation.
- e. Office of Political and Military Affairs: The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Security Assistance authorities of the Department of Defense.
- f. Office of Consular Affairs, Human Rights and Migration: Bureau of Consular Affairs, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
- g. CRS: S/CRS, Iraq Investment and Reconstruction Task Force (IIRTF) - Department of Commerce, Afghanistan Investment and Reconstruction Task Force (AIRTF) -Department of Commerce

A notional organizational outline follows:



Resources

Creating a Department of International Relations would not necessarily result in an increase in the overall budget for foreign relations activities. It would, however, provide the means to use the consider influence of the United States more effectually. To that end, it would be necessary to consolidate the resources of the agencies and programs consolidated within the Department. Giving a Secretary of International Relations authority over a comprehensive budget should decrease the ineffectual overspending or under spending that is currently characterizes diverse and autonomous programs executed without respect to broader foreign policy objectives. In addition, the coordination of programs should enhance influence and effectiveness through the coordination of complimentary effects. In addition to budgetary authority over its own core components, the DFR would have a voice in the international activities of other agencies through the formulation and use of a strategic foreign affairs policy.

Human Capital

Not only should this department be organized around its mission, but also its culture should be consciously interagency. Currently the professional government personnel involved in foreign affairs activities abroad do belong to a self-identified community. There is a “foreign service” community whose members, despite organizational differentiations, view “foreign service” as a fundamental aspect of their professional identity. The existence of this “foreign service” community is acknowledged by the American Foreign Service Association and by the eligibility criteria for membership in the DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired). However this community is divided by organizational boundaries: State, USAID, USTR, Commerce, etc.

Along with expanding the bureaucratic boundaries to create a consolidated foreign relations department, it will be necessary to create a career personnel system and culture to match. This will require three programs.

First of all, the present Foreign Service of the United States (a largely Department of State personnel system) to be expanded to include all career officials committed to a professional “foreign relations” career. Apart from USAID and former USIA officers this will include the most obvious candidates such as the Agricultural Attaches of the Department of Agriculture, the Commercial Attaches of the Department of Commerce and quite possibly FBI agents on a Legal Attaché career track, similar DEA agents, and probably a significant number of employees of USTR. (Obviously within the Foreign Service personnel system, there will be room for technical specialties equivalent to the current political/economic/consular/administrative cones of the Foreign Service or the Military Occupational Specialties of the US Army.).

People will enter into this Foreign Service either by direct entry or by transfer from the career services of other departments and agencies.

Secondly, personnel from other departments and agencies will be eligible for short-term appointments into the Foreign Service for employment in the Department of Foreign Relations, either in Washington or in overseas posts and missions. In fact, it should be possible for such career employees in other departments to serve periodically in “FS” assignments, just as FS personnel will be eligible for regular and periodic “excursion” tours in other departments.

Finally, it should be normal practice, especially for senior positions, to recruit candidates from across the Federal Government system. The new Foreign Service will be the core and foundation of the Department personnel system and culture, but will not have automatic or exclusive claim on positions, either in Washington or abroad.

The objective would be creating a “foreign relations” career culture which includes career officials from many departments and which expands to fill the substantive boundaries of the “foreign relations” world. If the Department of Defense had not already appropriated the term, it would be tempting to say that the objective would be to create a “purple” foreign relations culture.

Congress

The consolidation of a very large majority of the foreign relations programs into one department opens up the possibility of better Congressional oversight. A single Committee in each House, or a designated Joint Committee, would be in the position of considering the whole picture of USG foreign operations as a unified program. This will also help focus comprehensive foreign policy planning in the legislative arm of government.

Conclusions on a Department of International Relations

PNSR’s Overarching Assessment and Explanation for National Security System Performance found that “multi-agency missions often performed poorly” and that missions conducted primarily within a single bureaucracy typically perform better. In the case of the Department of State, this finding is qualified by the fact that U.S. government foreign policy programs are spread around almost thirty departments and agencies with almost no central direction and management except at the presidential level. While the Department of State occupies the center of the civilian foreign affairs community, it is too narrowly focused on traditional diplomacy and does not exercise sufficient authority or resources to manage the full range of foreign relations effectively. Even at the country team level where unified management exists in the form of the Chief of Mission authority, *de facto* unity of effort is limited by the relative autonomy of the diverse departments and agencies participating on the country team.

This lack of coordination limits the impact of any individual programs and prevents them from being fully and consistently applied in support of broader strategies to promote American interests, from strategic and regional to local levels. If we are to ever maximize US influence abroad, we must build a civilian organizational capability that is as well organized and capable of integrating civilian programs in support of foreign

relations as the Department of Defense is capable of integrating our diverse defense capabilities.

Currently the burden of integrating civilian foreign relations programs is placed on Chiefs of Missions and Country Teams. However, while the chiefs of mission, who are the face of the U.S. government to foreign governments “have the authority in theory. Sometimes they don’t actually have it in practice...It’s become an almost impossible task of coordinating massive numbers of agencies on the ground.”³ This problem has been extensively analyzed in the PNSR paper on Country Teams, which makes several recommendations for empowering them. However while these recommendations would improve USG integration on the ground, even empowered Chiefs of Mission and Country Teams cannot provide system-wide integration. A new and restructured DIR could do so, and in the process relieve the Country Teams of some of the responsibility.

Creating a multi-agency Department of International Relations would also rebalance the combination of soft and hard power and increasingly U.S. influence abroad. It also would support the solution sets offered in preceding options. Allowing the Department of International Relations to orchestrate the diverse overseas programs of numerous federal departments and agencies would support proposals for strengthening integration mechanisms in the White House, in the national security structure as a whole, and in Congress.

Conclusions on Structural Consolidations

There is no question but that the options reviewed here are politically difficult undertakings. Yet, as one statesman recently argued, the size of the task should not be an excuse for inaction if we are to effectively deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

“We as a country, we as a government, we as a Congress, can continue focusing on small details, and at the same time miss some very big-picture items. Goldwater-Nichols for the military, we did that. That wasn’t a small detail; that was a big deal, forcing better integration among our different services. We need a Goldwater-Nichols for the United States government....⁴

And what are these “big-picture items”? In a recent talk, Ambassador Thomas Pickering listed them as:

- Global Macro-Economic management
- Economic Development
- Energy and Global Environment
- Arms Proliferation and WMD Terrorism
- The Middle East – from Turkey to Pakistan

³ Condoleezza Rice, “Rice Urges more ambassador powers,” Washington Times, Nicholas Krlev, April 18, 2008.

⁴ Jim Marshall, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, “Decision 2008: The Way Forward in Iraq,” January 8, 2007.

- Relations with Major Potential Partners or Potential Competitors (Russia, China, India, Japan, Brazil)

Therefore the question is not the difficulty of the undertaking but whether the solutions proffered would have their intended effects and produce better results in dealing with these challenges. The proposed consolidated DIR is not a “Goldwater-Nichols” for the whole national security structure, but it would constitute one for “soft power”.

In this regard the PNSR quest for better integrated and resourced national security missions is reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes’ famous observation that “Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”⁵ It is impossible for one person—the president—to generate unity of purpose and effort from a rigidly vertical collection of semi-autonomous departments and agencies without consistently effective mechanisms for the delegation of his authority. Eliminate that impossibility and the only solutions that remain, no matter how improbable, must be accepted. The truth is that the United States will have to adopt some combination of the reforms offered in this paper if it wants a national security system that consistently produces unified purpose and effort.

Pros and Cons of the Department of International Relations concept:

Pros:

- Provides a more coherent structure and process for “Whole of Government” conduct of foreign relations.
 - a. Can help restore the balance between “soft power” and “hard power”.
 - b. Diminishes autonomy of current stovepipes.
 - c. Fosters an inclusive foreign affairs culture in the Government’s career service.
 - d. The unified management system supports Chief of Mission authority in the field.
- Introduces a single, authoritative executive management system for “soft power” from Secretary down to Chiefs of Mission, providing for unified management at appropriate levels (global, regional, country, and special projects or surge operations).
 - a. A unified soft power management structure will be better able to plan, organize and implement multi-faceted responses to non-traditional security challenges.

⁵ 'A Scandal in Bohemia' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

- b. Permits more effective organization of surge capacity in foreign affairs community.
 - c. Improves synergy between related programs, currently run under separate management.
- Simplifies the President’s span of control by providing a fourth leg to the national security “stool” (DIR, DOD, DNI, HLS) by replacing a large number of relatively autonomous program directors with a single Cabinet level manager.
 - Provides for more comprehensive oversight of overseas engagement programs by the President and Congress.

Cons:

- Difficult to design, negotiate, and implement - both politically and bureaucratically.
- Could raise tension in many departments between their domestic and their transferred or “deployed” foreign authorities, responsibilities, and resources.