Section VII: National Security Policy Processes
Fixing Three National Security Deficits: Purpose, Structure, and People

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It takes time to ruin a nation. But time is all it takes . . .

— Fontelle

For any entity or social grouping to succeed, at least three ingredients are essential: a recognized and accepted purpose for the entity, an organization and structure that permits and facilitates achieving the purpose or purposes, and, most important, the people to act in concert to accomplish the necessary aims. When each of these ingredients is in place, an environment of mutual trust, confidence, and respect is established and reaffirmed within the entity. When they are not, trust, confidence, and respect erode and the smooth or even necessary functioning of the entity cannot be ensured.

As will be shown, regarding U.S. security, there are severe and growing deficits in the categories of national purpose, organization and structure, and people. The symptoms of these deficits are unmistakable and are reflected in the highly partisan rancor that afflicts the government and leads to uneven performance in dealing with security. Unless or until these three deficits are closed, the task of assuring the nation’s future security will be compromised.

By most measures and to most Americans, the United States is the most powerful and prosperous country in the world. Its economy is unrivaled. It controls the largest share of the world’s wealth commensurate with an exceedingly high standard of living. It faces no threat to its existence and few challenges to its preeminence. Aside from occasional scares from terrorists or the actions of what used to be known as “rogue” states, few Americans worry much about defending the nation from external attack.

Without an enemy or some external catastrophe to challenge the aphorism that “all politics is local,” security issues have little or no political traction in the national consciousness. Unfortunately, until these deficits are confronted, the nation’s security will remain at risk for reasons that challenge the good health of any entity. “Good” people can keep a “bad” institution afloat, but only for a
limited time. No activity or institution can rise above flaws or deficits in overall purpose, structure, and people, at least if it is to survive and thrive.

Regarding national security, “national purpose” applies to the process and system for identifying clear, realistic, and relevant national security objectives, translating them into effective action, and providing the ethos for service that attracts the “best and brightest.” “Organization and structure” apply to how the nation is organized to ensure its security; and “people and personnel” apply to the process for attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of able citizens in government service. For reasons that follow, it will become clearer that each category is in severe deficit.

To be sure, deficits in money and resources or in technical prowess can be fatal. For the United States, neither of these potential gaps is currently the source of major problems. For one of the few times in history, the amount of money that could be available for security is not a limiting factor, and the United States certainly has the technical capacity to invent or produce virtually any system essential to ensuring the nation’s security.

The first deficit is one of national purpose, and it cuts across the boundaries of interests, politics, and threats in identifying and then translating objectives and aims into lucid and effective actions and policies; it also provides the ethos and incentives for public service. Clearly, with the end of the Soviet Union, the United States and its friends for the first time since 1940 face no danger to their existence. In this happy circumstance however, setting a viable purpose or series of purposes for safeguarding the nation’s security is made more difficult by the absence of clear and present danger.

Gen. George C. Marshall put this predicament in perspective six decades ago. He noted that if one got the objectives right, “a lieutenant” could write the strategy. But what are today’s objectives regarding the nation’s security? Protecting and keeping the country safe from harm is too vague a term on which to take definitive action. Ensuring U.S. supremacy and dominance likewise sounds good, but how is that sentiment translated into action and into objective policy criteria? The absence of clear and useful objectives means that defining a viable and credible national purpose will be elusive if not impossible. The prospect for drafting an effective strategy is thus at best guarded and perhaps bleak. Perhaps that will not matter; but suppose it does?

The U.S. system of governance and politics exacerbates this deficit. Government is divided with checks and balances; Congress and the presidency share and apportion responsibilities and authority for conducting national security,
creating an intended centrifugal quality to the nation’s politics. In the past, when it came to national security, many of these centrifugal and political differences stopped at the water's edge. But if either of these inherently centrifugal or partisan political forces cannot be constrained by some broader objective or purpose, then seeking any consensus—let alone agreement—on future direction becomes problematic and even unobtainable. Partisanship will substitute for consensus on issues of genuine national security importance to the entire country. Quite naturally, politics takes hold. The result is not always good for the country.

Regarding national security, this means that the lowest common denominator all too likely will determine future direction. It also means that, as long as there is no looming threat or crisis to force consensus, this deficit in purpose may never be remedied. Aside from adding to waste, the real danger is that the United States will embark on the wrong path particularly in important issues such as national missile defense (NMD) and relations with China and Russia. If mistakes occur, there are no obvious self-righting forces to compensate. Trust and confidence in U.S. policy and competence become victims. U.S. credibility and legitimacy are undermined. This, of course, happened during the Vietnam War. However, the presence of a rival superpower then still provided a powerful and credible basis for national security.

A further characteristic of this deficit and the state of the political process is the increasingly negative reaction to public service. As noted in the people deficit, there are clear disincentives, beyond financial compensation, that are demeaning and discouraging. Part of the deficit in national purpose is this building negative ethos toward national public service. After all, young people flock to sometimes dangerous positions with nongovernmental organizations and work in nasty places abroad or at home in inner cities. Furthermore, there appears to be no shortage of people applying to work in emergency services. Yet these same people would balk at the idea of working directly for the U.S. government.

The second national security deficit is in organization and structure. Put simply, the security structure of the United States is still very much organized as it has been for more than the past half-century. But the world has changed rather dramatically since the end of World War II. The demise of the Soviet threat is the most obvious of these changes. The instantaneous nature of global communications and commerce, powered by the information revolution, is another difference. Further, the transformation of the meaning of security to include and reflect more economic, law enforcement, social, and humanitarian issues continues to alter the strategic, geopolitical, and sociocultural landscapes.
The structure and organization for U.S. national security rest on the original National Security Act of 1947 and a view of the world conditioned both by the hot war against Japan and Germany and the cold war that was starting against the Soviet Union. The original act, amended since but still largely intact, established a national security council system headed by the president. The Department of Defense and a new Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were created and, along with the State Department and a structure for economic mobilization and production, these were the foundations for the security organization. The principal purpose was to deter and contain the Soviet Union. Clearly, as the nature of the Soviet Union and the world changed, modifications, usually on the margin, were made to organization and structure.

But the world of today and tomorrow are fundamentally different than the Cold War world. No one expects or believes that national security can be handled as if each problem was neatly organized vertically and could be assigned to an individual department. The issues are crosscutting and horizontal and reach across many jurisdictions and departments with both national and international responsibilities. But the old divisions of authority and responsibility used in the 1947 National Security Act no longer fit the broader and more ambiguous security boundaries. Revised divisions of labor are needed to redress the mismatch between the present vertical organization and the crosscutting, horizontal nature of the challenges that reflect the changed security environment.

For example, as requirements for countering terrorism, drugs, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have replaced the need to counter equivalent threats once posed by the old Soviet Union, the overlap increases between federal law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and intelligence agencies such as CIA and National Security Agency (NSA). Indeed, there is also growing overlap among federal, state, and local law enforcement responsibilities.

Similarly, as military forces are used increasingly for nonwarfighting tasks—principally humanitarian and peacekeeping interventions as well as antidrug surveillance—the traditional bases and rationale for each, defined under the old organizational scheme embodied by the National Security Act, become less relevant. Indeed, a symptom of this trend toward overlapping responsibilities is surprisingly apparent in the design of local police forces. With well-equipped SWAT teams that use armored vehicles and advanced weapons to counter better-armed criminals and even terrorists, police increasingly resemble military formations.
To what extent are peacekeeping-related military tasks going to replace the warfighting missions on which the National Security Act was based? Ultimately, without a foreseeable threat of major war, this question must be answered to determine how U.S. forces are trained, operated, and used.

The other branch of government charged with national security responsibilities, the U.S. Congress, also suffers from organizational and structural deficits. In part, this organizational deficit has been inherent in Congress since the Constitution was adopted more than 200 years ago. Congress is a legislative and not an executive branch, but that does not mean that there should be no attempt to introduce change that can limit or mitigate the excesses of partisanship and divided government. Nor should organizational change that serves to integrate the two branches and respond to the profoundly changing international security environment be dismissed or not addressed. It is interesting to observe that Congress still produces thirteen separate appropriations bills as it has done for decades, regardless of whether those are the right categories for spending the nation’s money.

The third and probably most severe national security deficit is one of people and personnel. It is simply becoming more difficult to attract and retain sufficient numbers of able people into government service in general and the security fields in particular. This applies to all levels other than perhaps the very top cabinet and appointed positions. There are many reasons for this deficit. A strong economy and the lure of great success in the private sector are obvious incentives for able and ambitious people. But, in addition to the compensation issues, government service is being demeaned by a number of negative trends.

First, government service requires people to conform to government rules that are becoming increasingly invasive and confining. Disclosure of assets, a clearance process that often seems endless, and a confirmation process for Senate approval that strips away privacy are among some of the more demeaning features. The criminalization of political differences or genuine errors is another factor that discourages service. Further, postemployment limitations, particularly after service in the executive branch, are not designed to attract the best people.

Second, while the size of government and number of government employees is decreasing, the number of political appointees in the executive branch has swelled. President John Kennedy made about 400 senior political appointments in 1961, from cabinet head to assistant secretary. The next president will appoint about 4,000. In many cases, the qualifications for appointment rest on a spoils system to reward political contributions and labor or to ensure political loyalty to
the particular administration from within the bureaucracies. The result is that nonpolitical people are discouraged from serving.

Third, compensation is not keeping pace with the private sector, and much of the work is becoming more demeaning, more tedious, and less rewarding. Under those circumstances, what is the attraction of public service?

There is much in the way of anecdotal and other analysis to support the growing people deficit. The State Department is finding it exceedingly difficult to fill entry classes of Foreign Service Officers. Not only is the career seen as less attractive, but the department is also literally broke and desperately in need of money. Staffing at reduced levels increases workloads. Because of a scarcity in funds, embassies abroad are generally not well-maintained with modern telecommunications and other systems, and aspiring Foreign Service Officers know it. In other agencies, a generation of senior executive and civil service officers across government will reach retirement age or will take early retirement. Because the numbers of retirees will be so large, there are insufficient replacements in the pipeline. Thus, a huge gap in senior civil service levels and experience will be created.

Within the Department of Defense and the four military services, there are growing signs of people drain. With a uniformed military of 1.4 million, this quiet crisis has not received the attention that it merits. But, on balance, many service personnel are simply not happy with or rewarded by the value of service, especially when, in their view, they are required to spend so much time away from home on missions that are not seen as important to the defense of the nation. Retaining the most qualified officers, especially pilots and submariners, is growing increasingly more difficult.

A last example of this people deficit extends to Congress. The number of members and staffers with a national security background, regardless of sector, is shrinking. Fewer members have any real interest in the area and fewer have had any military service. Thus, for concerned citizens or members of the executive branch, where does one go to have even a discussion of genuine national security issues? The points of contact and interest for this type of discourse and exchange are diminishing.

One current issue in particular underscores the dilemmas and deficits facing the nation’s security and the likely inability of the process to deal with them. It is national missile defense. Both presidential candidates agreed that some form of NMD is needed, but their differences appeared to lie in the system’s “robustness”—that is, the size of the program and how many interceptors are needed—rather than on basic strategy and purpose.
Reasons for the popularity of NMD are more political than strategic and had their public genesis in the Republican Contract for America issued by then–Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. The Contract for America in 1994 called for missile defense, and a growing fear within the United States has since been kindled that a former rogue state, now termed a “state of concern,” could acquire an intercontinental ballistic missile and nuclear weapons and use them to threaten or to attack the United States. A 1998 congressionally mandated study concluded that it was technically feasible for a state such as Iran, Iraq, or North Korea to obtain this capability by 2003. The commission did not predict or conclude that such an event would occur, only that it was possible.

As a result, conservative Republicans in Congress have made the requirement for NMD both into a law signed by President Bill Clinton in 1999 and a political litmus test for loyalty. The Clinton administration, in part to deal with the law and the potential missile threat, and in part to preempt and to mollify members of Congress, embarked on a plan for developing a limited missile defense system based in the United States. Originally, plans called for a decision to deploy NMD to be made this autumn. That decision was sensibly deferred for the new president. Contributing factors included the very strong opposition to the system on the part of Russia, China, and European allies in NATO; the consequences for the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; and several failed tests that challenged NMD technology. But the question that has never been fully asked and answered publicly is what purpose does missile defense serve?

If the objective is to prevent a third party from attacking or threatening the United States using ballistic missiles, are there operational alternatives to a land-based system—such as a sea-based form of boost intercept to attack the missiles as they are first launched—or strategic options to use friends and other states to prevent unstable or untrustworthy states from obtaining this capacity? Indeed, what happens if the prospect of this type of threat from North Korea, the state of principal NMD concern, evaporates or diminishes?

As noted, the Russians and Chinese, along with some European members of NATO, are extremely concerned about the strategic consequences of an NMD deployment in the United States. Indeed, the Clinton administration did not fully consult with its allies in Europe on this particular deployment decision, even though the United Kingdom and Denmark must agree to base detection radars without which NMD cannot work. Both Russia and China are almost certain to respond to U.S. deployment decisions by bolstering nuclear capability, China perhaps more dramatically than Russia given that its current force of only 20 or 30 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) is relatively small.
But, in this process of decision, little public attention has been given to engaging
the Russians and Chinese in achieving the ostensible strategic and political
purposes of NMD through restraining former rogues from fielding the capability
that the United States seems to fear so much. As a result, a U.S. misstep and
wrong decision in deploying NMD has the very likely prospect of dislocating
and upsetting much of the strategic balance and achieving little in its current
form in defending the nation.

**What Then?**

These three deficits must be addressed and closed if the next president wants to
enhance the nation’s security with a likelihood of longer-term success. There are
no easy or immediate solutions. Fortunately, there are no wolves close to the
door—yet. However, that good news should not be allowed to obstruct or defer
change or to ignore the warnings that have arisen.

One aim of remedial action must be to rebuild trust and confidence in the process
by closing the deficits in purpose, structure, and people. Of the three, the first
deficit will be the most difficult. Overcoming the inherently partisan and
centrifugal tendencies of the U.S. system of government may not be possible
without an overarching threat or consensus-forcing crisis to mitigate the basic
sources of divergence. Logic and reason, without the motivation of fear and
danger, may not suffice. However, the other two deficits are more prone to
solution and correction, and the inherent difficulties cannot be allowed to
discourage action.

To create sufficient public attention and action, the president should propose
several new laws to deal with these deficits. Although each of the proposed
pieces of legislation is aimed at a principal deficit, clearly, each law will have
some effect on the other deficits. Indeed, correcting the purpose deficit may well
require that the other two are closed first. Legislation is also the only way to
impose the necessary change for dealing with the national security realities of the
new century.

To correct the organizational and structural deficit, a new or amended National
Security Act should be proposed. The basis for this act is would be to deal with
the security environment of the 21st century, rather than that of the long-gone
Cold War. The major conceptual design would be to recognize that the nature of
security has been transformed and broadened. Defense can no longer be the
surrogate for security. The agencies and departments must be organized and
empowered in accordance with this newer definition of security.
A key part of this legislation should deal with the branch that was untouched by the original act, the Congress. A congressional national security council system to parallel that of the executive branch would be established. The membership of the “CNSC” would be determined by Congress and probably include, at the least, the majority and minority leaders of both Houses, the Speaker of the House, the Vice President of the United States in his capacity as President of the Senate, and key committee chairmen.

The primary purpose of the CNSC would be to provide a better organizational scheme and discipline within Congress regarding the topic of national security. A second purpose would be to integrate better the two branches of government and provide a better means for interaction. A further purpose would be to mitigate or reduce some of the partisan excesses that have too frequently arisen, by having a better structure for conducting business between the two branches.

A second part of the act would rebalance the organization of the executive branch and the assignment of responsibility and authority among its agencies, in keeping with the expanded needs of security. The key conceptual aim would be to recognize the new nature and definition of security and the increasing importance of law enforcement and humanitarian and economic issues. This could lead to substantial reallocation of authority and responsibility.

A second proposed law could be called the Public Service Act; its purpose would be to close the people deficit. First, it would establish a special commission to qualify and certify citizens for public appointed office. Individuals could apply directly or be nominated for possible appointments. The commission would preapprove or recommend these individuals for a range of appointed offices across government and in terms of seniority as well. In a sense, this would proceed as the Civil Service Commission and other selection boards.

When an administration had to fill an appointment, potential nominees could come from a list of qualified individuals submitted to the White House by this commission. The list could be updated as appropriate. The administration would be free to follow the recommendation or appoint its own nominee. One advantage would be to reduce political patronage while allowing the president the freedom to appoint whomever he or she wanted. Another would be to remove the tedious clearance process from the list of White House responsibilities. Thus, if an appointee were found to be wanting due to a faulty background check, the political fallout would be far less. The commission and not the White House would be responsible.

Part of this law, or other legislation, would be a consolidation and reduction of the rules and regulations regarding government service. The more onerous and
unnecessary ones would be removed, particularly regarding clearances, privacy, and even postgovernment employment restrictions. A separate commission would best do this perhaps with oversight from a board of nonpartisan “elder statesmen” and citizens both with and without government experience but with reputations for integrity and candor.

A further and more provocative part of the proposed law would be to establish government-supported national security academies. These would be similar to the current service academies, providing both a university education and training for those who would then serve in government for a specified period of four or five years. Indeed, the current service academies might be expanded in size so that a certain number of graduates, still granted a reserve commission, could serve in other, related national security areas of government. The concept here is that to make the broader area of national security more conducive for service, basic incentives are needed. Additionally, means for lateral entry of older citizens must be devised and put in place.

Closing the organizational and structural gaps will go a long way to reducing the purpose deficit. However, it is foolish to believe that purpose and comity can be legislated. At best, the atmosphere can be made more conducive and healthier for the other reforms to take hold.

Future Prospects

That the United States will remain the world’s most powerful country is likely to be true for some time. That the United States will act wisely and judiciously to ensure its future security and interests is more questionable. Fortunately, the absence of real danger is one of the strongest security advantages a nation can possess. How long this condition will last and what unintended damage flawed or misdirected policy actions can produce in the meantime are unknowable.

During this period of U.S. dominance and relative security calm, the nation must recognize its weaknesses and embark on remedial steps before those options are foreclosed. This is not the best action slogan or the most stirring political rallying cry. Yet, it is an accurate assessment of what must be done.

The security of the nation is unlikely to rest on how ready the nation’s military forces are or what type of weapons systems are bought and developed—although, as mentioned before, a wrong decision on missile defense could be catastrophic. Instead, focus should be placed on correcting these three systemic deficits. No organization or entity can be expected to succeed if its purpose is in doubt. No entity can do well if it is poorly organized or dysfunctional. And,
above all, any entity is dependent upon its most crucial resource—its people. The United States has within its reach the ability to deal with these deficits. Whether it will is another matter.

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The Infrastructure of American Diplomacy

William C. Harrop, former U.S. Ambassador and former Inspector General, Department of State

The next president of the United States, the first to take office in the 21st century, will be more dependent upon diplomacy than his predecessors. In the global era, the world’s major power and largest trading nation has no choice but to be engaged. The question is not whether but how the United States will interact with the rest of the world. The international agenda has been transformed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and most new issues require collective rather than unilateral action. These changes have magnified the importance of communication and persuasion among governments and peoples.

Perversely, however, the United States since 1992 has systematically reduced its appropriations for the conduct of foreign relations. American diplomatic readiness has been eroded, and continuing budget reductions projected by both Congress and the administration will further hollow out U.S. capabilities. The new president should place high priority upon reversing this dangerous slide. In the absence of a conspicuous external threat such as existed during the Cold War, only the president’s sustained leadership can marshal the needed public and congressional support.

Fundamental reforms are required to equip the U.S. diplomatic system for the challenges of the 21st century. These reforms have recently been specified and analyzed in three perceptive (and compatible) studies prepared by distinguished American U.S. leaders. The failure of a resistant administration and bureaucracy to implement these important recommendations, and to place appropriate emphasis upon diplomacy, has understandably contributed to the reluctance of Congress to provide more resources. Congress seldom appropriates more than the executive requests.

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The Components of National Security

Our national security, reliant upon the dynamism of the American U.S. economy, is buttressed by three elements of the federal government: intelligence, diplomacy, and the armed forces. Their interlocking functions make up a system analogous to the meshing of the land, air and sea components of the armed forces. Diplomacy is prevention, the first line of defense. If the United States can exploit opportunities and resolve international differences through discussion and negotiation, it does not need to risk the lives of American servicemen and women. If diplomacy is weak, or ineffectual, troops may have to be deployed prematurely.

Yet, the international affairs budget that pays for diplomatic efforts, also known as the 150 Account, is addressed viewed by Congress as a domestic appropriation, part of “discretionary spending.” Appropriations for the departments of State, Justice, and Commerce are debated in a single bill, such that diplomacy must compete directly for resources with the domestic political constituencies of small business, the census, the judiciary, law enforcement, the war on drugs, and so forth. Diplomacy lacks a domestic constituency. By contrast, appropriations to support defense and intelligence, the 050 Account, are addressed quite properly by Congress as national security: they are protected from diversion behind a national security “firewall.”

Small wonder, in the absence of the sort of life-and-death threat posed by the Soviet Union, and in the absence of vigorous presidential leadership, that appropriations for the conduct of diplomacy have plummeted since 1992. In the 1960s, the international affairs account made up about 4 percent of the federal budget. By the early 1990s, it was down to 1.5 percent. Now, the congressional budget resolution agreed upon in mid-April 2000 fixed the allocation for fiscal year 2001 at $19.8 billion, just 1 percent of the proposed federal budget and $3.5 billion less than total appropriations for this function for fiscal year 2000. Since the end of the Cold War, the administration, as again this year, has consistently requested too little for the 150 Account, and Congress has consistently further reduced these already inadequate requests. The budget for foreign affairs, in constant dollars, is today 41 percent below its level in the mid-1980s.

America’s New International Agenda

At the same time as U.S. funding for diplomatic efforts has been decreasing, the world has grown increasingly interdependent. Diplomacy is as involved with economic and social issues, notably export promotion and business support, as it
is with national security. Financial markets are intertwined. The United States is the world’s largest trading nation. Exports account for a third of U.S. economic growth and have provided a million new jobs in recent years. Overseas markets are pivotal for U.S. agriculture.

So the timing is bad for a decline in America’s diplomatic readiness. U.S. foreign policy now seems more complicated, less manageable, than it was during the Cold War. Then, the Soviet threat was a yardstick against which to measure each issue. Whether the challenge arose in the Congo, Cuba, Central America, Afghanistan, Vietnam, the Middle East or Angola, the United States knew what it had to do. Advanced American technology and American military and economic power were relevant to the task. The United States sought, but was rarely dependent upon, the assistance of allies.

How has the international agenda of the United States changed? A new list of issues and problems has replaced the nuclear stand-off of the Cold War. These include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems; the enforcement of trading rules, including intellectual property rights, dumping, and non-tariff barriers; terrorism; international crime, especially drug trafficking; regional conflicts, often ethnic or religious, causing refugee displacements and, frequently, enormous bloodshed and human suffering; the world environment, including population growth, global warming, pollution, and the exhaustion of natural resources; the maintenance of international financial and economic stability; democracy and human rights, including the status of women and minorities; and, finally, the regulation of hundreds of international activities in the age of globalization, including telecommunications frequencies, air traffic control, food and drug standards, health, immigration, and taxation, to name a few.

Such issues seem rather more complex than the decision to deploy U.S. economic and military strength to block Soviet expansion. The new problems cannot be solved by one nation, even by the only global power. They demand communication, building coalitions of concerned governments and organizations, and working together with others to address issues that ignore national borders. In short, they demand diplomacy. Other nations tend to hang back, expecting leadership from the superpower.

The Hollowing Out of U.S. Diplomatic Readiness

How has the denial of resources affected America’s ability to defend its national security and to promote its expanded international agenda?
A global power should support its interests through representation in essentially all world capitals (although embassies in small countries need comprise only a few people). There is no telling when a vote in the United Nations may prove critical, where key minerals may unexpectedly be discovered, where terrorists may find a haven, when access to a particular airfield may become essential, when an American tourist or company may desperately need help. The cost of such representation is minimal. Yet, at the millennium, there has been retraction in official U.S. presence abroad. Since 1992, the United States has closed nearly 40 of its overseas embassies and consulates.

U.S. embassies and the State Department, although information is the bread-and-butter of their work, operate with outdated, needlessly complex, and dysfunctional information management and communications systems. In fact, there are currently four separate information technology systems in use, none of which provides full service or an internet connection to the World Wide Web. In fairness, it must be said that this lamentable state of affairs is attributable to poor management as well as inadequate resources.

The State Department has revealed that in the year 2000 there are 200 fewer mid-level Foreign Service officers than there are positions around the world to be manned. In the mid-1990s, the dearth of appropriations led the department to suspend its Foreign Service entry examination and to reduce drastically both the intake of junior career officers and the promotion of those already in the service. Unlike the Department of Defense, the State Department, when requesting appropriations, makes inadequate work force provision for the personnel requirements of travel, leave, and training. Thus, the actual deficit in the Foreign Service is closer to 700 officers, or about 15 percent of requirements.

A result of this situation, beyond persistent staffing shortfalls and tasks only partially accomplished, has been a contraction in professional training, including language study; it has been difficult to spare overworked diplomats for training. The inadequacy of funds has also obliged the Department of State to limit U.S. representation at international meetings and conferences.

The physical state of many American embassies, and the working conditions for overseas staff, are shameful. In late 1999, the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel found that “the overseas facilities of the wealthiest nation in history are often overcrowded, deteriorating, even shabby.” With regard to the inadequacy of funding for security at overseas posts, the panel noted that “thousands of Americans representing our nation abroad still face an unacceptable level of risk from terrorist attacks and other threats.” Morale has inevitably suffered under these circumstances.
Modernization and Reform

Reforms are essential to adapt a diplomatic system effective during the Cold War to the very different new environment. Some of these needed changes are closely related to the current lack of resources—almost creating a vicious circle—while others could be implemented by the State Department (or, if several agencies are involved, by the president) without need for additional resources. While implementation of three major recommendations—revamping information technology, managing overseas buildings, and enhancing security—require new spending authority, others should realize economies.

Attitudinal change will be necessary. Reform must always overcome bureaucratic resistance, and this requires determined leadership. The Foreign Service has a powerful, inner-directed culture; this is an institutional strength—except that such a culture resists change.

The three studies cited earlier reach very similar conclusions about the changes urgently needed to equip American diplomacy for the circumstances of the 21st century.

The Stimson Center Report, under a senior steering committee chaired by Frank Carlucci, was launched in an effort to replicate for diplomacy the experience in the 1980s of the Laird–Goodpaster–Odeen Commission, which contributed importantly to passage of the landmark Goldwater–Nichols Act to reform the Department of Defense.

The CSIS Report, under an advisory panel of 63 distinguished Americans, was designed to review the conduct of diplomacy with a focus on the information revolution, the widening participation of publics in international relations, and the concurrent revolutions in global business and finance.

The Overseas Presence Advisory Panel (OPAP), composed of 25 leaders from business, politics, government, labor, and defense, was appointed by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright following the report of Admiral William Crowe’s Accountability Review Boards on the bombing of U.S. embassies in East Africa in August 1998. Its broad mandate was to consider the future of America’s overseas presence.

While the State Department has begun to implement some of the OPAP report, the administration failed to request and to justify to Congress a level of funding adequate to pursue the most basic major recommendations. The department apparently does not intend to pursue a number of the urgently recommended reforms. It is critical that the next administration vigorously carry out the
modernization of its diplomatic infrastructure. The studies named above provide a clear blueprint for action, which can be distilled under ten headings:

1. Security of U.S. Embassies and Consulates

Budget approximately $1.4 billion for security annually for ten years, in appropriations additional to and separate from appropriations for normal operating expenses, to upgrade barriers, windows, and warning systems in overseas properties; to construct new overseas office buildings to agreed criteria where necessary; to procure modern equipment, employ more and better trained security specialists, enlarge cooperation with host governments, and expand training in security awareness and procedures for all overseas staff; and to reinforce lines of authority and accountability.

2. Information Technology

Consolidate the State Department’s four systems into two, classified and unclassified, that can provide both access to the internet and the ability to communicate internally; build a system linking together all government agencies that have overseas interests; upgrade the department’s current information technology capability using commercial off-the-shelf technology wherever possible; establish a working capital fund of approximately $400 million to finance the costs of acquiring outside consultants, equipment, and additional bandwidth, retraining information technology staff, hiring and retaining additional technicians, and modernizing the systems in the future as new technologies become available; establish a working-capital fund, which could be replenished as necessary by contributions of agencies utilizing the systems, outside the functional 150 Account, as the expenditures will benefit a large and growing number of agencies now operating overseas in addition to the traditional foreign affairs agencies.

3. ‘Right Sizing’ of Embassies

Better adapt the staffing of U.S. embassies to actual U.S. interests country by country through a comprehensive review, under specific presidential authority, of the overseas presence of all agencies; while it is assumed that such a review will lead to substantial reduction in staffing, particularly at smaller posts that should need only two or three persons, maintain U.S. representation in nearly all world capitals; increase flexibility and adaptability of representation through development of “magnet embassies” with functional specialization, a surge
capacity to reinforce small embassies in times of crisis, and revival and expansion of a foreign service reserve system to be tapped as needed.

4. Managing Overseas Buildings

Create a federally chartered government corporation, an Overseas Facilities Authority (OFA), responsible for building, renovating, maintaining, and managing the federal government’s overseas civilian office and residential facilities, replacing the State Department’s Foreign Buildings Office and with more authority, more flexibility and increased participation by other U.S. government agencies with significant overseas presence.

5. Relations with Congress

Establish a State Department Congressional Liaison Office on Capitol Hill patterned after the successful Capitol Hill offices long maintained by the armed services; provide incentives for middle and senior grade personnel to serve in the department’s legislative bureau.

6. Public Diplomacy

Seek repeal of those portions of the Smith–Mundt Act of 1948 which prohibit the domestic dissemination of programs designed for foreign publics, and of the Zorinsky amendment, which prohibits the use of appropriated funds to influence public opinion in the United States; expand State Department and embassy relations, consulting and contracting with nongovernmental organizations and the academic community; encourage ambassadors to engage in active dialogue with the media and public.

7. State Department Workforce Planning

Undertake a comprehensive workforce review to identify the diplomatic and technical skills required in the 21st century, then recruit and train accordingly; provide for and seek funding for expanded training in languages, regional and functional expertise, management and leadership competence; match skills to needs; improve the quality of life for overseas employees and families.
8. **Commercial Diplomacy**

Establish a tripartite State Department–Congressional–Business Community Forum to discuss issues affecting business and government in specific foreign nations and markets, and to develop procedures and policies for more effective advocacy of U.S. business interests; distinguish between the very different needs of big business and those of small and medium-sized companies; revive the business exchange program under which foreign service officers work for a tour in a private firm; institute user fees for services to business.

9. **Decentralization—and its Implications**

Delegate the implementation of policies determined in Washington and the management of country strategies to ambassadors in the field; look to ambassadors to coordinate the programs of the various agency representatives under their authority, and to set priorities among American purposes, which in the local context are often complex and not always consistent; require ambassadors to act as the president’s representative and chairperson of an interagency team, not just as officials of the State Department; given the responsibilities placed upon them, select ambassadors carefully for judgement, experience, and leadership capability, and see that they receive thorough training.

10. **Interagency Coordination**

Utilize to the greatest advantage the National Security Council system, which, despite human frailties, has stood the test of 53 years; make greater use of interagency coordination mechanisms for international trade, monetary, environmental, and law enforcement questions; look to ambassadors for coordination in the field; strengthen the link between the departments of Defense and State, especially between ambassadors and their staffs and regional military commanders in chief and their staffs, including periodic regional crisis simulations, and in expanded exchanges of personnel between the departments.

**Conclusion**

All three of these reports, while proposing remedies for managerial and institutional flaws they found in the diplomatic system, urged early restoration of adequate resources for the conduct of U.S. international relations. The next president must exert personal energy and leadership to obtain both the necessary reforms and the essential appropriations.