

THE QUADRENNIAL DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (QDDR):

Concepts Are Not Enough

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There are times to be polite about a dismal bureaucratic failure. Wartime is not one of them. The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) has many useful ideas but it fails to address the legacy of nearly a decade of failure on the part of the State Department, USAID, and the civil departments of the US government to come to grips with the need to provide effective civilian partners in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It does not address the failures in the top leadership of USAID and State that left the US military without effective civilian partners for much of the Iraq and Afghan conflicts. Nor does it discuss that aid programs: emphasized spending without fiscal controls regardless of effectiveness; failed to effectively coordinate the civil side of the US country team in either war; and proved unable to support the US military with solid, real world civil inputs to a joint campaign plan. It grossly understates or ignores the lack of contracting skills and controls, and the fact that both State and USAID are still floundering in seeking meaningful metrics and reporting on their efforts in both wars after nearly a decade of experience.

The QDDR ignores years of reporting on these problems by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR), and recent reporting by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR). It equally ignores a wide range of reporting by the GAO and various departmental inspector generals, and years of reporting by Congressional Staffs.

The QDDR should have been a frank and critical effort that examined case studies in the failure to plan for effective civil and stability operations before each war, to execute effective civil operations during the initial invasions, and to develop and improve programs in the years that followed. Instead it fails to address problems that have denied the military the civil partners they need to effectively support both wars

More broadly, there is no meaningful analysis of of the overall US aid effort over the past decades, or effort to to examine where money has gone, and the effectiveness of such spending in other countries. The differences between the quality of emergency relief and conventional aid are not addressed in meaningful form. The extent to which the flow of US aid now goes to Egypt, Israel, and other nations with minimal US planning is not addressed. The need to create a more functional relationship between the State Department, USAID, the US military, and the US intelligence community is not analyzed in either crisis area or where more conventional partnerships with host countries need to be improved. Instead, there are long laundry lists of recommendations that are not prioritized, defined in enough detail to be credible or justified.

Most importantly, the QDDR does not provide an action plan that responds to the urgent needs to support ongoing conflict and the need to form civil-military

strategic partnerships except by assuming that problems can be solved by boosting the role of USAID and more coordination and planning on a top-down level. There are many items on the QDDR laundry lists that may eventually prove useful, but the QDDR is a Washington-centric “study” at a time when war and a major budget crisis created a need for a clear and effective plan for immediate action.

An Executive Summary Filled with Buzzwords

Far too much of the 19 page Executive Summary is little more than a collection of buzzwords like “civilian power,” “21st Century challenges,” etc.. Its recommendations are little more than a morass of new organizational initiatives (and growth) within the State Department, conceptual slogans, and self-seeking politically correct rhetoric.

To the extent that the Executive Summary does make recommendations for action, they look like a compendium of slogans and maxims from business schools and textbooks on public administration. In practice, they amount to little more than another vacuous government report calling for clearer lines of responsibility and leadership, more coordination, better strategy, better people, and better planning and management – recommendations that are unquestionably valid in broad terms and meaningless in dealing with urgent, real-world needs in the field.

A Main Report Filled with Concepts Rather than Tangible Plans

It is the main QDDR report, however, which presents the most serious challenges. The introduction acts as if the wartime failures of the last decade did not take place, and there were no clear causes behind the much longer-term decline in in US civil aid programs. Most of the document acts as if there was no history behind the problems and challenges we confront, and no reason to examine past cases and the allocation of funds and their effectiveness.

The Introduction to the QDDR ignores a long series of efforts that shifted US aid to international agencies in an effort to limit the burden on the US. It ignores the history of legislation from figures like Senator Jesse Helms that helped cripple USAID in the first place, and the failure of the State Department to ever effectively create a structure that could plan, program, budget, and execute effective State-USAID-DoD-other agency civil and civil-military operations in the field.

The QDDR ignores the impact of creating a US foreign aid program that shifted much of US aid to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan in ways that were little more than direct payments in support of an Arab-Israeli peace.

It does not address the downsizing of USAID in ways that focused field operations on emergency relief, except to note in passing that, “Over the past decade, USAID has spent an estimated 70-80 percent of its resources on complex humanitarian

emergencies.” (p. 132) It does not address the issues that turned much of the rest of USAID into a contracting agency whose capability consisted largely of the ability to spend money on traditional aid programs without validating the requirement for such programs or being able to measure the way money was spent or the effectiveness of given programs. (It also compares DoD and State spending without any indication of why the imbalance is so great. (p.6)

Above all, it concentrates so much on power relationships at the top, and in Washington, that it largely ignores the nature of the problems the US still faces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and which led SIGIR to issue so many critical assessments of the failures of State and USAID in Iraq.

Chapter 1: Global Trends and Guiding Policy Principles: Touring the World Without Really Addressing Needs and Requirements

It is hard to argue with the broad overview of US diplomatic needs in the 21st century in Chapter 1, but it is all too easy to point out that it is also largely irrelevant to the tasks at hand. It does not address the relative need for aid or civil and civil-military programs in the field, or address any of the lessons in the field since 2001. The one reference to the urgent needs we face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan occurs on page 15, and does not address any lessons or need for change.

Chapter 2: Adapting to the Diplomatic Landscape of the 21st Century: Half-formed calls for Uncertain Actions

Chapter 2 may appear to call for substantive action, but is remarkably lacking in detail. It calls for vague, undefined activity at the top and Washington level. It ignores the reality that key efforts have to be managed at the local level. It does not address any of the problems that crippled our initial efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq:

- The causes of the failure to frankly and effectively assess the political, economic, and security problems that would flow from US military action in either the Iraq or Afghan War during the planning for the initial invasion, or during the initial period of occupation. The problems that led to a failed CPA in Iraq, and a focus on national building in Afghanistan that tacitly assumed that the challenge was largely one of peace keeping and could be delegated to our allies.
- The reasons for the break down in State leadership of the Interagency effort to plan for the invasion of Iraq and the de facto transfer of responsibility of the effort to DoD, followed by a STATE/USAID failure to plan for, staff, and execute stability and aid operations through the life of the CPA and well into 2007.
- The failure to create aid plans based on carefully validated requirements and credible plans, and the virtual reinvention of each new effort as if each year in Iraq and Afghanistan was the first year of that war.

- The inability to formulate real-world aid and civil-military action programs for Afghanistan, and to anticipate the problems in creating a new structure of government, and the limits to what aid could do. The failure to plan for a relevant rule of law and police program. The inability to assess the risk the Taliban could recover, to see the need to preserve the need to pay the Afghan civil service, and to focus on governance at the local, district, and provincial levels – rather than simply at the center.
- The problems that led to the US military taking over most effective aid work in the field until a new PRT system could be created in Iraq and partly created in Afghanistan, but one that was heavily dependent on DoD CERP aid because of the failure to create effective civil alternatives. Problems that meant US civil-military programs in Afghanistan still rely on over 1,000 US military in early 2009 and less than 100 federal civilians in the field.
- The practical value of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan once these were implemented, and the demonstration that top down approaches do not work, and have far less effectiveness than efforts planned, managed and executed at the in-country and local levels.
- Basic problems in finding willing and qualified civilians that could work in the field with the proper technical experience, area expertise, continuity, and language skills – problems that raise as many questions about the proposals for creating a new body of experts as for a civil reserve and whether the current State Department FSO system can provide the needed skill levels and willingness to take risks versus future reliance on specialists now provided by contract hires.
- A failure to manage aid funds that SIGIR, GAO, and SIGAR show led to massive waste, fraud, and abuse in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and which has been a primary factor in creating massive new levels of corruption in Afghanistan – problems that have now led to an ongoing US military-led effort to reform the process.
- Critical remaining problems in setting aid requirements at every level, contracting effectively, managing contracts and contractors, controlling and auditing funds and activity, assessing program execution, and proving measures of effectiveness. These problems were greatly compounded by bureaucratic stovepipes and “golden silos” in the State and USAID efforts in both Washington and in the field.
- The cost-benefit of creating massive “fortress” embassy compounds in Iraq and Afghanistan with layered stovepipes of civil activity within State and AID. (The report notes a mix of 550 state, 390 USAID, 300 other agency, and more than 1,000 local hires in Afghanistan without addressing the why, the efficiency, how many are actually in the field, or the need for – and effective of – a civilian “surge” that only began to have an impact after nine years of war. (p. 28).
- The breakdown in State INL efforts to train the police in both Iraq and Afghanistan that forced the US military to take over the effort – and now create the need for a

new and far more effective INL effort to replace the US military in Iraq during the course of 2011.

- The matching failure to link the rule of law effort to the police effort, understand the need for paramilitary forces, and address the reasons countries like Iraq and Afghanistan have evolved their own approach to criminal and civil justice, policing, and mixing formal and informal justice systems. This was compounded by the failure to create credible plans to establish a functional mix of governance, courts and detention facilities, police, and other security forces at the local level.
- The sharp gap in basic planning and management capabilities between the military and the civil side – led by State and USAID – that have made the supposed joint civil-military campaign plans in both wars to have specific, practical military sides, and largely hollow and conceptual civil sides.
- Consistent failure on the part of State and USAID to assess the need for aid and advisory efforts based on a realistic assessment of the impact of key economic issues like income distribution, structural economic problems in areas like water and agriculture, income distribution, the gray and black structure of the economy, un/underemployment, and demographics and population growth.
- The QDDR calls for “deepening engagement with our closest allies and partners (p. 47) without ever addressing the history and ongoing reality of critical real-world problems in coordinating aid and civil-military programs with our allies, the UN, and host governments – especially in Afghanistan. The impact of problems in civil-military coordination by allied forces, “national branding “of aid without regard to real host country priorities and needs. Underresourcing of the kind that led to the collapse of the German police training effort in Afghanistan. Problems with national caveats in both allied civil and military operations.
- The sections in the QDDR ignore a long history of failed efforts to create meaningful management and assessment tools for either war. These include State/USAID failures to execute a meaningful maturity and then stability model in Iraq and are in transition without an agreed approach; and virtually every civil program in Afghanistan – including critical programs like the rule of law, police, and aid efforts in the field -- are still developing new, basic metrics and planning systems after more than nine years of war. USAID, State, and DoD are all still seeking basic metrics for such efforts
- The QDDR also focuses on methods of analysis that imply countries cases are alike, and can be analyzed using some form of standard model and metrics. It does not examine the problems of creating effective civil-military reporting and metrics that suit the needs of executing effective programs in the field. It confuses justifying an aid request with the tools necessary manage and execute complex programs tailored to specific contingencies and country needs.
- It does not examine the failure on the part of State and USAID to ever issue meaningful quarterly, semi-annual, and annual assessments of the their aid programs and their effectiveness. It does not note their past reliance on using

spending and project starts as measures of effectiveness. De facto reliance on the Department of Defense quarterly and semi-annual reports remain the only serious official reporting on the civil side of activity in both wars.

- There is no analysis and assessment of the problems in contracting out various aspects of the US diplomatic and aid efforts. There is no analysis of the relative merits and problems in career, temporary, and host country hires. There is no analysis of the problems in contracting in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Similarly, there is no analysis of the relative merits and problems in relying on international institutions, host-country program execution, and/or NGOs. These have all proved to present serious problems in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chapter Two is specific about the need for a 25% increase in the foreign service and 123% increase in the civil service, and the need for more consulates (pp. 50-51). *But*, it does not explain or justify any aspect of these efforts. Its calls for more dialogue, regional efforts, and top-level coordination with DoD are so vague that it is unclear what operational changes will actually occur – if any. The same is true of the long “shopping lists” for “engaging beyond the state” and public diplomacy (pp. 59-63), and for “community diplomacy” and public partnerships (pp. 63-70).

The section on “equipping our people to carry out all our diplomatic missions” (pp. 71-75) does address critical tasks in preparing civilian for high risk operations in the field, but has few specifics and fails to address the critical problem of how they are to move and be protected without direct support by the US military or private contract security forces (a potential cost of \$6 billion a year in Iraq in 2012 if all US military forces leave.) It assumes that all civilians should accept the risk equally, and does not talk about the need for specialists and the equivalent of combat pay. The rest is an empty list of possible ways of ensuring that everyone is getting better training than before.

Chapter 3: Elevating and Transforming Development to Deliver Results: Calling for More Spending Without Showing It Can Deliver Results

Chapter Three is ideology when it should be analysis. One can agree in theory with many of its statements, but the issue is not theory but practice. The world is filled with needs, and Americans certainly do need to be educated as to the role foreign aid can play in meeting urgent humanitarian needs and servicing US interests. (p.78). This chapter, however, is a model of how not to make that case.

It cites few vague statistics and rationales for more aid and civil effort, and then briefly describes current spending levels. It fails to show that an effective method exists for setting requirements, managing and executing programs, measuring their effectiveness, or dealing with key issues like contracting and corruption. As such, it does more to validate the arguments of those who claim State cannot make a

convincing case for aid than refute them – the last thing State needs in the current political climate.

When the QDDR does get specific about actions like transferring the Global Health Initiative to USAID, it indicates the analysis of the real case for this will be deferred to 2012 (p. 84 and pp. 217-219.) Pages 85-93 touch on important human issues in a fog of politically correct rhetoric. Pages 93-100 take an equally politically correct approach to partnership without discussing any of the real world problems and issues involved. They are little more than a call for a “coalition of the spending.” Pages 100-103 trot out an equal list of clichés about innovation.

The section dealing with the need for State and USAID to actually measure results and effectiveness calls for a suitable *policy* in January 2011 (p. 104) with no specifics or details. It does so after nine years of massive wartime spending, and 65 years of postwar aid efforts. This is simply an unacceptable level of past incompetence with solutions effectively deferred to the future.

The call for transparency is unintentionally ironic, given the fact that no discussion is made of the problems that still affect even the most basic efforts to assess results in Afghanistan and Iraq. (p. 105) Developing multiyear plans of the kind that should have been in the civil part of the joint campaign plans is evidently going to take three more years to complete. (p. 106)

The sections that call for “building USAID as the premier development agency” only touch on its past and current problems for one paragraph (pp. 107-108). No effort is made to describe how it will be made more effective, or the rationale for the goal of 1,200 new officers to add to the current level of 9,000 (p. 108).

There is a good list of activities that USAID does need to carry out (pp. 109-115):

- Establish development policy and strategic planning capacity.
- Empower multiyear development planning in the field.
- Strengthen USAID’s budget and resource management.
- Improve operations to support development.

What the QDDR does not even attempt address is why these things have not already been done, why USAID’s current leadership will be any more effective in accomplishing them than in the past, and why relatively basic reforms sometimes seem to take up to 2013 to accomplish.

As for elevating USAID’s “voice,” will creating whole new layers of coordination really do this? (pp. 115-116). Like previous calls for dialogue, this form of post-modern obfuscation is not reassuring.

The sections on “transforming State to support development” set out equally vague goals. (pp. 116-119.) The critical section, however, deals with “managing foreign assistance resources” and only talks about creating new organizational structures in ambiguous terms without any discussion of the new planning and management systems that are required. (pp. 119-120.)

Chapter 4: Preventing and Responding to Crisis, Conflict, and Instability Without Really Addressing the Problems Revealed in More than Nine Years of War

If there is any chapter that should address the problems of nine years of war and focus on case studies and real-world examples, this is the chapter. Instead, the most it does is to provide an ambiguous list of worldwide problems (p. 124):

Yet too often our reaction has been both post hoc and ad hoc. We have not defined and resourced the problems of conflict and crisis as a central mission of our civilian toolkit or developed adequate operational structures to support U.S. and multi-partner responses. We have responded to successive events without learning lessons and making appropriate institutional changes to provide the continuity and support. Too frequently, we:

- Miss early opportunities for conflict prevention;
- React to each successive conflict or crisis by reinventing the process for identifying agency leadership, establishing task forces, and planning and coordinating U.S. government agencies;
- Scramble to find staff with expertise in conflict mitigation and stabilization, pulling personnel from other critical roles to send them to crisis zones with limited preparation;
- Rush to compile resource requests and reprogram within limited budgets;
- Turn to embassies that are not equipped to house or execute complex, multi-layered responses or to operate amidst significant instability;
- Leave it to our civilian and military teams in the field to figure out how best to work together;
- Rely on traditional diplomatic and development strategies rather than build new tools (embedded in on-going institutions and processes) tailored to conflicts and crises;
- Coordinate poorly with multilateral institutions, foreign governments, and nongovernmental partners in our response;
- Delay bringing conflict, humanitarian, terrorism, law enforcement, intelligence, and military communities into the same policy and planning process for emerging crises, missing opportunities for synergy, shared intelligence, and integrated solutions; and

- Fail to adequately understand and plan for the unintended consequences of large-scale operations and assistance, which can inadvertently intensify corruption and breed local cynicism towards our efforts.

This list is better than no list, but it is so brief and out of context that it belongs in the Executive Summary, rather than be buried deep in the report. Most important, it fails to address the causes of these problems, their seriousness, and their impact. This list also fails to address the real world issues listed earlier that have emerged after more than nine years of war.

It also merits far more specific plans of action than the equally general list of “solutions” that follows – some of which seems aimed as much at soothing Congress as towards eventually taking real world action:

We have learned from what has succeeded and failed in the past. Going forward, we will:

- Adopt a lead-agency approach between State and USAID based on clear lines of authority, a complementary division of labor, joint structures and systems, and standing agreements with other agencies;
- Bring together a cadre of personnel experienced in this discipline within a new bureau, fill out a standing interagency response corps that can deploy quickly and flexibly in the field, and provide broader training for diplomats, civil servants, and development professionals;
- Develop a single planning process for conflict prevention and resolution, sustainable governance, and security assistance in fragile states, including planning to address potential intended consequences of our assistance and operations;
- Develop standing guidance and an international operational response framework to provide crisis and conflict prevention and response that is not dependent on individual embassies;
- Create new ways and frameworks for working with the military to prevent and resolve conflicts, counter insurgencies and illicit actors, and create safe, secure environments for local populations;
- Coordinate and integrate assistance to foreign militaries, civilian police, internal security institutions, and justice sector institutions to promote comprehensive and sustainable security and justice sector reform; and
- Strengthen our capacity to anticipate crisis, conflict, and potential mass atrocities and raise awareness of emerging governance problems.

A central aim of the QDDR is to determine how to use our resources most efficiently in a time of tight budgets. Building an effective and deployable capability to prevent and respond to 21st century crises and conflicts will require resources for improving our tools and training, deploying the right personnel, and changing our ways of doing business both in Washington and in the field. But we are committed to spending these resources wisely—and measuring the results. What is more, investments in civilian capacity today can head

off much costlier military or humanitarian interventions down the road. For this reason, Congress has been a champion of these investments in the past, and we look forward to the continuing partnership necessary to deliver the results America needs. (pp. 124-125)

The QDDR then attempts to assign broad roles and missions, but it leaves key aspects of this effort up to the usual vague structure to improve future coordination: (p. 133)

As they address the increasingly complex challenges of our future, State and USAID will both strengthen their capabilities. State will strengthen its capacity to:

- Direct and coordinate whole-of-government approaches in the field, and facilitate international cooperation;
- Facilitate complex political and security solutions with local partners;
- Surge the right people, at the right time, with the right expertise;
- Develop and implement initiatives, interventions, and programs that mitigate violence, facilitate transition, and strengthen fragile states;
- Engage in humanitarian diplomacy and manage State humanitarian assistance funding by augmenting State's presence in and focus on areas of conflict displacement; and
- Support comprehensive, balanced security and justice sector assistance programs that integrate military assistance and reform, policing, and justice sector institutions.

USAID will strengthen its capacity to:

- Lead multiple agencies and respond to simultaneous crises by doubling the size of the staff of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance; and
- Strengthen its capacity to provide specialized, conflict-specific programming to support State's leadership in political and security crises and to link relief, recovery, and development assistance more effectively.

To ensure successful joint operations, State and USAID will develop a flexible decision-making mechanism to address differences that may arise during implementation of this approach. This mechanism will operate at a high enough level of authority to act quickly and decisively.

The specifics that follow in “reshaping state Department structures to the mission” are broad organizational changes of the kind that are all too typical of most government reports on reform. They call for new layers of coordination and control without examples of how they would function or what problems they would solve. They also are top down solutions to efforts that have to be executed in country and in the field. (pp. 135-136.)

The same is true of the sections on “expanding USAID’s capacity for conflict programs and to transition from relief to development” (pp. 137-138), and “pursuing a whole of government mission.” (pp. 138)

It is also more than a little disturbing that the QDDR then goes on to call for a future study of the very problems it should have addressed in the first place: (pp. 140-141)

The United States must move from the rhetoric of multiagency response to its reality. The Department of Defense has long recognized the need for interagency response to violent conflict. In fact, many of the Combatant Commands have representatives of more than a dozen agencies at their headquarters. While that interagency support for military responses is critical, addressing the root causes of violence requires a civilian equivalent: an integrated, interagency framework for preventing and responding to crisis and conflict that marshals all the civilian capabilities of the U.S. government. We must also ensure that the civilian component of our response is better coordinated with our military response—both when our military is actively deployed in stopping conflict and when the mission transitions to civilian leadership.

... In developing this new framework, State and USAID will conduct a fact-based analysis of past failures and successes in interagency response mechanisms, both international and domestic, to determine what works. The IORF will draw on applicable elements from the widely-recognized National Incident Management System utilized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency when responding to domestic disasters as well as other international mechanisms. Like its domestic counterparts, the IORF will govern how the U.S. government conducts crisis response by addressing coordination among agencies, ensuring flexibility and speed in our response, and providing staffing to meet urgent needs.

The text then advances a series of laundry or shopping lists of potentially good ideas and good intentions when -- nearly a decade into war -- it should be advancing prioritized specifics that are each explained and justified

The analysis of the personnel changes needed to implement its recommendations does not address the key problems in assigning government employees to high-risk areas, or the problems in identifying truly competent personnel, obtaining their services, and providing suitable incentives. (pp. 144-145).

The section on the “Expert Corps” makes the same mistake as in creating a “Civilian Reserve:” It *assumes* all-purpose experts are available with the needed area skills: (p. 145):

Replace the “Civilian Reserve” with a new Expert Corps. Beyond the current Civilian Response Corps, which draws on active U.S. government employees, the United States needs access to deployable experts from outside the government able to hit the ground running in response to crises overseas. Without a corps of such experts, in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan we have had to rely on temporary hiring authority to bring on external experts with special skills not readily available within the U.S. government. The reserve component of the Civilian Response Corps was proposed as a mechanism to put more than 2,000 US experts from outside government in reserve service for four years with a required deployment of up to one year. The Reserve was authorized but never funded due to Congressional concerns about projected size and costs.

We will propose replacing the “Civilian Reserve” with a more cost-effective “Expert Corps” consisting of an active roster of technical experts, willing but not obligated to deploy to critical conflict zones. The Expert Corps may include current temporary hires who have successfully served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere as well as other civilians with critical skills. We will work closely with Congress to pursue necessary funding and authorities for the new Expert Corps, with a more efficient budget focused on the costs of deploying the corps, rather than maintaining a large reserve. The Expert Corps would also not include earlier deployment requirements or re-employment rights necessary for a reserve. The Expert Corps would be well-suited to smaller-scale complex crises as well as large-scale U.S. operations.

If the QDDR had paid more attention to the real world problems in Iraq and Afghanistan, it might realize that “expertise” is area, culture, and country/region specific; and that the problem skills may simply not be available.

The sections on “Using data and evidence to deliver results” (pp. 148-149), and “working with and through international partners” (pp. 149-152) are again filled with vague prescription for the future. They should, by now, be action plans and based on real-world assessments of the problems involved.

The long section on “building a long-term foundation for peace under law through security and justice reform” ignores virtually all the major lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan over the last nine-plus years. (pp. 152-158). The need for short-term capability, integrated rule of law and policing efforts, realistic assessments of formal versus informal justice systems, problems in capacity building and retention, the impact of gray and black areas in the economy, the need for paramilitary police, problems in contract and INL training capacity, and shortfalls in allied capabilities are not addressed.

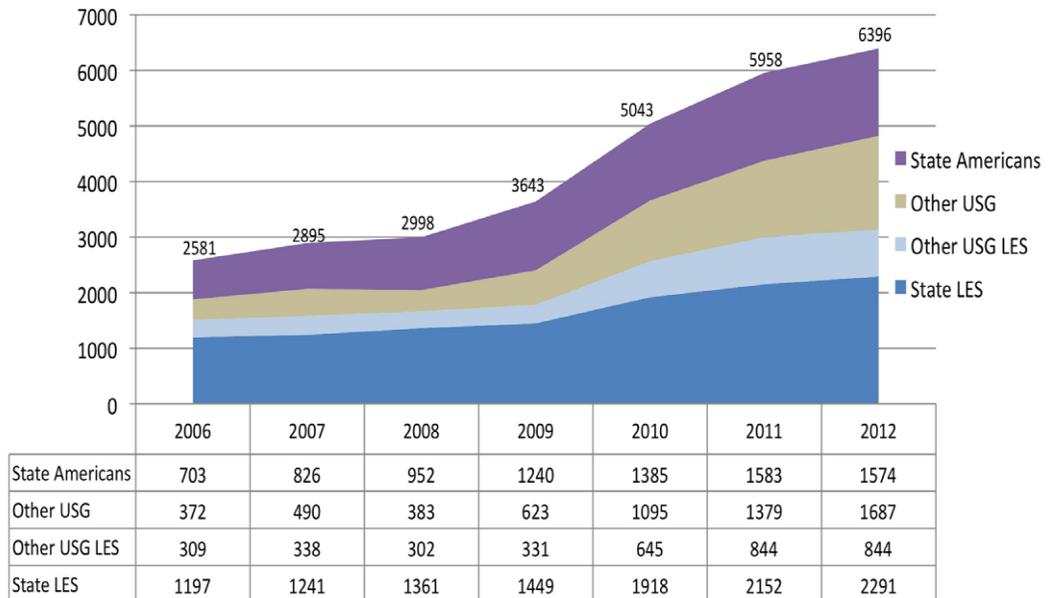
Chapter 5: Working Smarter: Will Everyone Really Become Well Above Average?

Chapter Five does address the scale of the build-up for Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan during the period since 2006 (a bit late for wars that began in 2001), although it grossly understates the delay involved in responding to need, and the difficulties in getting the requested number of – much less right – personnel: (pp. 160-161)

Over the past five years, State and USAID have been called upon to significantly expand our presence and operations in frontline states such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. And we have responded to that call. From 2006 to 2010 we have nearly doubled the numbers of employees reporting to the Chiefs of Mission in these three countries from almost 2,600 to more than 5,000. By 2012 we expect that number to rise to 6,396. Yet our ability to meet these urgent and immediate personnel needs in critical countries has only been possible at the expense of operations elsewhere, as we have had to redeploy personnel, leave critical vacancies in other missions, and scale back our presence in some countries.

Insufficient authority and resources to hire in the recent past have resulted in mid-level gaps in staffing and experience at both State and USAID. Numerous reports and evaluations have documented staffing and skills shortages as critical impediments to State and USAID’s success in meeting new challenges. A soon-to-be-released Stimson Report sponsored by the American Academy of Diplomacy notes that “In late 2008, more than one of every six Foreign Service jobs worldwide went unfilled. In high-hardship posts (excluding Iraq), 17 percent of Foreign Service Officer positions were vacant, and 34 percent of mid-level positions were filled by officers one or two grades below the position grade. Training suffered and skills were not up to standard....”

Projected Deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan: 2006-2012



- State Americans include FS, CS(LNA), 3161
- Assumes 2011 klevels continue into 2012

These numbers are followed by yet another long laundry list of potentially useful suggestions that may be able to help with part of the problem. Once again, however, there are no specific plans, estimates of size or cost, or the problems and lessons of nine years of war – particularly in getting career FSOs to accept high-risk rotations. (pp. 163-166)

The section on “Rewarding and Better Utilizing Civil Service Expertise” has an equally good list of measures, but again does not address the need and timing of specific action, or the problems and lessons of nine years of war. Key issues like risk premiums or combat pay equivalent, transfer into FSO status, job retention rights, and other practical matters need more attention. (pp. 168-166)

The same issues affect the other laundry lists of possibly good ideas that follow in improving the experience gap in the foreign service, dealing with locally recruited

staff, training programs, and improving incentives. (166-177). There are many good ideas, but when are they to be acted upon? When will hard choices, trade-offs, budgets, and schedules be presented?

The section on “managing contracting and procurement to better achieve our missions” has useful broad diagnostics, but suffers badly from a failure to address past mistake and problems and the reporting of SIGR, SIGAR, the GAO and other agencies. This is a critical failure that still badly undercuts all of the US efforts in the Afghan War and can have a major impact on strategic partnership with Iraq. At the end, it is unclear what reforms and changes will take place and when. (pp. 177-179). The same is true of the talk about competition and broadening the partner base (pp. 184-186), and building local development leadership (pp. 186-187). These actions may suit peaceful conditions in functioning states, but do not suit war or crisis.

Most importantly, these are largely laundry lists of conventional efforts to improve contracting that do not address the real world issues in operating in combat and high risk zones, under near or real time conditions in the field, and dealing with host countries that lack basic capacity, are often corrupt, and where the issue is the effectiveness of the effort as much as fiscal control. (pp. 179-182). It simply is not clear that these reforms meet the real world needs of the last nine years.

The section on contract security forces does not address the trade-offs between such efforts and assigning US military forces to the job. It does not address the new requirements imposed by the Montreux Convention, the liability and legal issues involved, or host country sensitivity after the series of scandals in Iraq. (pp. 183-184)

The main subsection dealing with “planning, budgeting, and measuring for results” seems to ignore all of the problems with similar efforts since 2001; and the ongoing activity in ISAF, the embassies, US commands, and other efforts in Afghanistan and earlier in Iraq. It talks about “streamlining,” rather than Taking effective action and management and reporting systems. (p. 188.) The focus is on central Washington-based activity, although mention is made of Integrated Country Strategies. (pp. 191-193).

Unfortunately, these seem to be strategies that are largely conceptual and not plans, assessment, and documents with clear spending plans and measures of effectiveness. It is not clear how they relate to the USAID country development cooperation strategies called for later (p.195), or what level of planning, programming, and budgeting detail – or effectiveness measures – are involved.

It is also unclear how relevant any of this will be to crisis and wartime needs like those in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. The QDDR states that ,

We are already undertaking a review of the performance data we collect and the data we need. The goal is to rationalize data collection and reporting requirements so the costs of data collection,

both in terms of dollars and time, correspond to the value of the information obtained. State and USAID have made progress on this front—reforms over the last several years have reduced the number of performance indicators from over 10,000 foreign assistance indicators to approximately 600. As we have cut, we have also rationalized. In the past, decision-makers could not compare results across programs because the indicators used were devised by the specific program implementers without regard to comparability across programs. Our current common reporting framework of 600 foreign assistance indicators allows decision-makers to compare partners, programs, and countries and respond to stakeholder questions that rely on cross-program data. Six hundred indicators to track foreign assistance, however, are still too many and the indicators focus heavily on common stakeholder questions related to inputs at the expense of information necessary to evaluate outcomes and impact. State and USAID have jointly identified further improvements, including reducing the number of current foreign assistance indicators by 33 percent and incorporating indicators that better assess outcomes achieved. This work will be complete in 2011, in time to inform the FY 2013 planning process. (pp. 197-198)

It is far from clear that any of this will lead to effective, country and crisis-specific improvements of the kind so badly needed in ongoing conflicts. It seems almost absurd to talk about either 10,000 or 600 indicators that are applied generally to all aid efforts, and not focus on the need for proper analysis and reporting by project and country, and a focus on find the right analytic tools to plan, manage, and execute given tasks. There seems to be a virtually denial of the need to deal with case specific tools, and find ways to effectively inform policymakers and the Congress of the validity of the requirement for action and how well it is then executed and has an meaningful impact.

Similarly, the discussion of integrated civil-military efforts in both wars not only ignores past and existing problems, it implies a level of common effort that simply does not yet exist:

Success in Iraq and Afghanistan requires the seamless integration and optimal balance of military and civilian power. Our civilian operational capacity is expanding markedly to meet the requirements of transition in Iraq and the President's strategy in Afghanistan. As the civilian mission grows, resources must shift commensurately.

- In Iraq, we are in the midst of the largest military-to-civilian transition since the Marshall Plan. Our civilian presence is prepared to take the lead, secure the military's gains, and build the institutions necessary for long-term stability. After years of uneven coordination between State and the Department of Defense, the President's decision to draw down our troops in Iraq has prompted the first comprehensive joint State-Defense planning effort. Over the past year, Department of Defense and State have systematically reviewed more than 1,300 tasks the military was performing in Iraq and determined together which activities should be transferred to State, which should go to the Iraqis, and which should sunset as our troops depart. State and Department of Defense FY 2010 Supplemental and FY 2011 budget requests were crafted to support the specific roles and missions jointly agreed to as part of draw-down planning. These requests show that while State will require additional resources to meet its expanded role in the transition to civilian lead in Iraq, the United States will still reap billions of dollars in savings from the drawdown of U.S. forces and commensurate expansion of the civilian role.
- In Afghanistan, we have been integrating our civilian and military missions, as well as the requests for resources to fulfill those missions. We have already begun to look ahead to the beginning of the drawdown of U.S. military forces in July 2011 and the transition to Afghan-

led security in 2014. The transition process is being planned jointly with the Afghan government, with NATO and other allies, and in conjunction with an integrated U.S. plan for resourcing as transition unfolds. In each transitioning province, civilian departments and agencies will be taking on tasks previously performed by the military. We are drawing on the experience in Iraq to prepare in advance for this process. (pp. 201-202)

The whole history of the problems in these efforts to create integrated civil military operational plans is ignored. So are the very different needs of integrated civil-military operations in countries with large arms transfers and FMS programs, and the increasing number of countries where joint efforts are needed to deal with both terrorism and at least low-level elements of insurgency.

There is potential merit in creating an integrated – or at least directly comparable State/USAID and DoD approach to budget for the wars. The QDDR notes that,

Establishment of an Overseas Contingency Operations budget. Roughly one quarter of the State/USAID budget goes to civilian efforts in three frontline states: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. State and USAID resource requirements for these missions are extraordinary given the unique security and political situation, and are likely to be short-term in nature as conditions on the ground change. In these frontline states, investing in civilian operational capacity is as critical to our strategy and ultimately our national security as our military efforts.

The Department of Defense has traditionally budgeted for the costs of its overseas contingency operations in a separate request from its regular or base budget. In this way, Department of Defense can fund its requirements for contingency operations, which are also extraordinary, with less of an impact on the regular budget. Beginning in FY 2012, State and USAID will propose a State/USAID Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account to cover the extraordinary civilian resource requirements in the frontline states and allow State and USAID to respond effectively without undermining American influence and power elsewhere in the world. A State/USAID OCO account will allow the Administration to describe the whole-of-government cost of our missions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, illustrate how civilian and military efforts are mutually supporting, and ultimately facilitate the integration of civilian and military power in contingency operations, thus providing for a more effective and efficient U.S. effort. (p. 201)

These benefits will only occur, however, if State/USAID and DoD provide an integrated and directly comparable civil-military budget proposal. One of the QDDR's most positive recommendations is,

We cannot continue to let our strategies and policies follow piecemeal pots of money and stove-piped authorities. Nor can we demand of our workforce collaboration, agility, and innovation while maintaining planning and budgeting mechanisms that remain independent and out-of-sync. Through the QDDR, State and USAID have begun to work across the interagency and with Congress to accelerate and expand efforts to better coordinate and implement comprehensive, integrated, and fully resourced strategies. Overcoming the fragmentation in strategic planning and budgeting through innovative mechanisms such as joint mission planning, an Overseas Contingency Operations budget, pooled funding and, ultimately, the creation of a unified national security budget process will ensure that all the components of American power work together to advance our interests in the 21st century. We will commit to working in support of the White House's review of options for more effectively aligning resources across the interagency with the National Security Strategy. (pp. 202-203)

Unfortunately, there is no specific timeframe suggested for such action, nor is it clear what level of justification will be provided, or how it will be presented to Congress. In

fact, the whole QDDR seems to largely ignore the existence of a broader budget cycle, and the existence of the Congress.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Ending with “To integrate all the components of America’s power, we must make the ‘whole-of-government’ mantra real”

The QDDR ends with a call that, “To integrate all the components of America’s power, we must make the “whole-of-government” mantra real.” (p. 206) This sums up the most critical weakness in its whole approach to solving time-urgent problems. A mantra is defined as a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that are capable of “creating transformation” simply by being articulated often enough to effect a spiritual transformation. Far too much of the QDDR relies on buzzwords, good intentions, and conceptual laundry lists as if they alone were sufficient. It should be advancing tangible and well-defined actions, with detailed justifications and costs.