

The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review

A NOBLE EFFORT

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Gerald F. Hyman

With the promulgation of four documents—President Barack Obama’s National Security Strategy of 2010¹; his September 2010 speech on the UN Millennium Development Goals²; his simultaneous Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD)³; and the December 2010 State/USAID Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)⁴—the Obama administration has put its stamp on development policy and strategy, including heralded departures from predecessor administrations, especially that of George W. Bush. Essential details remain to be provided. Only when they are will it be possible to understand the proposed changes announced in the QDDR, let alone draw any conclusions about them. Yet, despite the two-year gestation period and the expectations it engendered—“So last year, I announced a sweeping review of diplomacy and development, the core missions of the State Department and USAID respectively”⁵—the surprise, even absent the critical specifics, is not the degree of divergence in policy and approach but the extent of the continuities.

As a general matter, the documents are disappointing in at least two respects. First, they lack the elements of a true strategy: objectives; impediments; priorities; central plan; and consequent resource allocations. Second, and perhaps as a result, they dwell far too much on internal organizational and procedural issues and too little on what should be done abroad and why. There is nothing wrong with an internal review of organization and process. An unvarnished review and reform could be very welcome, especially given the fractured quality of both foreign assistance and (less) of diplomacy. But a review of organization and process should not be confused with—gussied up as—a new approach...and a strategic one at that.

Strategy used to have more meaning. It still does in the military. As the recent questions and cautions about the plans for intervention in Libya illustrate, the military wants to know *ex ante*

1. The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

2. “Remarks of President Barack Obama—As Prepared for Delivery, Millennium Development Goals Summit United Nations Headquarters New York, New York,” September 10, 2010, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/22/remarks-president-millennium-development-goals-summit-new-york-new-york>.

3. Drafted and cleared through “the interagency process” by the National Security Council, the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) is an NSC document and therefore not public. However, a coincident “Fact Sheet: U.S. Global Development Policy,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/22/fact-sheet-us-global-development-policy>, was publicly released on September 22, 2010, and “knowledgeable sources” say that it captures the essence and all of the substantive details of the PPD itself (hereafter, the fact sheet will be referred to as the “PPD.”)

4. U.S. Department of State, *Leading through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2010), <http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr> (hereafter the “QDDR”).

5. Ibid., Introductory letter from Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton.

what the goals and objectives are, what the means are, how the latter accomplishes the former, what the plan is for doing so, what the end game and the exit strategy look like, how they know when their mission has been accomplished, how they know if they are succeeding or failing, and what they should do about it. It allows them as well to gauge the resources they think necessary to achieve the strategy, how to deploy them and whether the goals justify the means. To have a strategy is to have a *plan* that will answer those questions, even if an unsuccessful plan. Not all strategies work, as Napoleon discovered. But the failure to have a strategy—a plan by which objectives are to be reached by the deployment of resources in the face of obstacles and resistance, sometimes in the face of a counterstrategy—is at the least to run a high risk of confusing tactical and strategic allocation of resources, even to risk randomness or chaos. It is not wise if the objective is to encircle the enemy, defeat lung cancer, or win a trial verdict simply to arm the infantry and yell “fire at those guys,” run haphazard lab tests and procedures, or call random witnesses and ask random questions. A strategy, a plan, would provide temporal and substantive priorities. If unsuccessful, the results would be clear and, if timely, allow for a revised strategy. But a list of good things to do does not become a strategy merely by labeling it so. Unfortunately the past several national security strategies, those of both the Bush and Obama administrations, and now the QDDR, which presumably flows from the Obama National Security Strategy of 2010, suffer from precisely that weakness.

The result is that, unlike the Defense Department’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the PPD and the QDDR (ostensibly patterned on the QDR) provide a general description of ideas that would arguably improve diplomacy and development assistance and their interaction. Perhaps they would. Many are interesting. Many have been tried before. Many need far more elaboration to allow any kind of reasonable judgment. Many are premised on the unlikely provision of the resources necessary to effect them, and, as the QDDR itself says, “execution is everything.”⁶ But the QDR begins with an analysis of the defense challenges, “the complex environment”⁷ facing the United States, and proceeds from there to the needs and resources presumably necessary to meet the challenges. That is the proper order for a strategy, not the reverse.

Yet the QDDR does claim to provide “strategic guidance,” “setting clear priorities...and a sweeping reform agenda.” In fact, “we are *transforming* both State and USAID...” [emphasis added].⁸ Moreover, it reiterates Bush administration principles that the civilian agencies, State and USAID in particular, have essential *national security* roles to play and, more ground breaking, that their roles—diplomacy and development—are “on a par with” those of the military in a three-legged stool of national security tools. “Secretary Clinton began her tenure by stressing the need to elevate civilian power alongside military power as equal pillars of U.S. foreign policy.”⁹ As to development, President Obama declares that “the U.S. will...elevate development as a central pillar of our national security policy, equal to diplomacy and defense.”¹⁰ Secretary Clinton’s QDDR makes a

6. QDDR, xix.

7. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2010), 5–9, http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf (hereafter the “QDR”).

8. QDDR, ii, ix, 116, and 191.

9. *Ibid.*, ii. Indeed the title of the QDDR is *Leading through Civilian Power* and a major theme—perhaps the major theme—is the interest in vitalizing the civilian side of the U.S. government as a partner to the much more muscular and powerful military side. It is perhaps an unusual moment in U.S., not just bureaucratic, history, that the military side concurs that another part of the government is relatively “under-resourced” and should be strengthened even at the cost of reduced resources to itself.

10. PPD, 4–5.

similar but slightly different commitment: “President Obama and Secretary Clinton have launched a new era in American foreign policy by committing to elevate development alongside diplomacy and defense as an equal pillar of American foreign policy.” Yet, these broad aspirations aside, it is the promised strategic guidance, the clear priorities, and the promise to “make the trade-offs and hard choices required to ensure that we invest wisely” that should constitute the core of the strategy but unfortunately are still missing.¹¹

Innovations and Divergences

The Obama administration does propose some innovations and departures from the past, three substantive and two organizational.

Building a New Global Architecture of Cooperation

Perhaps the major divergence is the one President Obama ran on in the presidential election, that U.S. foreign policy in general was too bilateral, not enough multilateral. From now on, the United States will “work with bilateral donors, the multilateral development banks and other international organizations to ensure complementarity—and coordination of efforts.”¹² Indeed, the United States will provide “leadership in the UN and international financial institutions” and “working with others, reform and reshape” them. To achieve those objectives, the QDDR commits State and USAID to enhance and strengthen staff, especially in State’s Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and elevate multilateral affairs in each regional bureau. For example, “the principal deputy assistant secretary in each regional bureau will be tasked with overseeing engagement with multilateral institutions” and will be “responsible for developing annual and multi-year strategies for engaging with and shaping regional organizations, delivering results through them, and, where appropriate, reforming them.” To do so and to better equalize development with diplomacy, “we will seek to ensure that all State personnel receive training in how to coordinate U.S. government activities with multilateral development agencies; and we will ensure that they recognize the importance of development in their diplomatic efforts, by incorporating development advocacy in performance requirements.” The United States will also “work to strengthen the capabilities of multilateral donors and trust funds to complement our development objectives within a country-led framework.” A favorite approach of many administrations, including the Obama administration, the United States will “leverage” these other donors and institutions to “complement our objectives,” meaning usually that the United States will contribute some portion of the necessary funds but pretty much decide on the whole pot (or at least lead the others to support the same program), including the funds of other countries, which is nice work if you can get it.¹³

Both the PPD and the QDDR are silent about how to accomplish these goals, other than through internal organizational changes like elevating multilateral affairs or multilateral approaches at State and USAID. Several modalities and institutional arrangements already exist for doing so, such as the international financial institutions (IFIs): the World Bank; the regional banks in Asia, Latin America, and Africa; the United Nations Development Fund; special trusts set up unilaterally or multilaterally; and ad hoc organizational arrangements. Others arrangements could

11. QDDR, xix and 75.

12. PPD, 5; see also QDDR, 77.

13. QDDR, xvii, 53, 55, 81, 97, and 118, respectively.

be fashioned. But no matter what the organizational or structural arrangement, the decisions are taken by a consortium of the donors or, more often, by a trustee institution, sometimes with and sometimes without regular, specific consultation with the donors. Would the United States be willing to forego its unilateral role in deciding how its own funds were being programmed? For example, assume for just a moment that the other parties—the other bilateral donors and the multilateral institutions—do not automatically follow the U.S. policy or program lead. Suppose they resist somewhat playing the follower role envisioned for them by the United States, whether in funding or in programming. Is the United States prepared to cede authority, influence, or roles it would like to play or the design of programs it would like multilateral “partners” to embrace? Will it, in turn, embrace or at least support roles and programs others believe are important but which the United States would not otherwise support or about which it has serious differences of design or priority? Will the United States really divide the labor and cede an area of serious interest to another donor? Will it contribute to a common pot? Suppose its funds are indistinguishable from the funds of others and therefore both the results and the problems are common and unattributable to any particular donor: How will it handle this “attribution problem,” especially in its reports to Congress? How about decision-making?

True, the United States already does some programming through multilateral mechanisms, but, leaving aside its shares in the IFIs, a distinct minority of its project-based development assistance is programmed through multidonor mechanisms, nowhere near as large a percentage as other donors, and certainly much less than the PPD and QDDR seem to envision. Hence the innovation. But if the Obama administration is serious about a more collaborative, multilateral role, all of these questions will need to be answered. No matter what the modality of any multilateral effort, the U.S. voice will at best be shared and the U.S. funds will lose their national identity to the mechanism of a multidonor agency or a consortium. It is unlikely, verging on inconceivable, that other donors will simply follow the U.S. lead, let alone turn over their funds to the U.S. government.

But if a multilateral approach to assistance raises questions and problems, a more multilateral approach to diplomacy would be either much more daunting or much more prosaic, depending on what the administration has in mind by a more “multilateral diplomacy.” It has long been a staple of diplomacy, if not its very definition, to try to enlist other states—and better yet, a multiplicity of states—in the objectives, interests, and policies of one’s own state. The United Nations is the prime arena for that kind of attempt, but of course there are many others. If that is what the Obama administration has in mind for enhanced multilateralism, it would merely be an additional emphasis on a time-worn mechanism. If, however, the Obama administration means that the United States will subject its own ideas of national interest and policy to a more multilateral process and will compromise more than other administrations in favor of a more multilateral approach, that would be a serious, innovative, but also controversial departure. No doubt, the extent and conditions of compromise and multilateralism are always matters of degree, depend on the issue and the extent of necessary compromise, and are subject to domestic political dynamics. Still, a truly multilateral diplomacy would certainly be a divergence, welcome for some, unwelcome for others.

Whole of Government

A second area of substantive difference is the greater emphasis on a “whole of government” approach to diplomacy and development. The operative word here though is “emphasis.” This is not a full departure. For example, the Bush administration undertook some reorganization of State and USAID through the appointment of a *de facto* (although never *de jure*) second deputy secretary

of state responsible for foreign assistance, precisely to try (unsuccessfully it turned out) to forge a more unified, less fragmented, interagency foreign-assistance effort.

Still, the PPD and QDDR do presage a more fundamental effort at enlisting all parts of the U.S. government, both in diplomacy and development. The president's three new initiatives—food security, health, and climate change—illustrate that effort. All three include multiple agencies. But any multiagency, whole-of-government effort confronts two problems. First is to avoid duplication and bureaucratic warfare or even undue competition between different units in different parts of the government, each wanting primacy over the effort. There is already far too much of that, especially when regional and functional units have overlapping mandates and programs. What role will State's environment unit play as against the Environmental Protection Agency's? Or USAID's health staff as against Health and Human Services'? The second problem is to ensure cooperation under some general plan or program. Who sets the plan and how? By what mechanism are the various U.S. government programs coordinated? How are tradeoffs, for example in funding, handled? Who makes what decisions?

All three presidential initiatives are to be “governed” by an interagency group or committee chaired, in all three, by State or USAID. And in all three, some other agency or department has substantial if not predominant knowledge and experience with the subject matter, at least domestically: health, climate, and food/agriculture. But even if these problems are handled for the high-profile presidential initiatives, can or will that be the paradigm for other, less-prominent programs? Moreover, all three presidential initiatives also envisage a very substantial increase in funding. Especially at a time of increasing budget austerity and talks even of domestic entitlement caps, an increased appropriation for foreign assistance seems improbable, to say the least.¹⁴ So if these initiatives survive, they are likely to change form or else the funding for some other programs will need to be diverted to these three.

The problem of U.S. government coordination extends well beyond the presidential initiatives and beyond even diplomacy and development. “Our interagency national security system remains, in the words of former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, ‘a hodgepodge of jury-rigged arrangements constrained by a dated and complex patchwork of authorities, persistent shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes,’” notes the QDDR, pointedly including defense not just diplomacy and development.¹⁵ Many departments, agencies, bureaus, and offices have similar programs, including programs in the same country. Very few are coordinated, let alone assigned to one or another rather than several entities. The QDDR asserts that, at the country level, all of them will be directed by ambassadors whose authorities will be appropriately augmented. “All U.S. ambassadors as chiefs of mission must be empowered and accountable as CEOs of multiagency missions” [emphasis original].¹⁶ Any analogy between government and the private sector is inherently somewhat problematic because of their different purposes, organizational principles, areas of accountability, measures of success, and the like. In the private sector, the CEO is the highest ranking corporate officer, responsible for the entire management structure of *subsidiary* units, for developing the vision and strategy for the entire enterprise and all of its subsidiary units, for its internal coherence, for setting standards, for all of its employees, and for its relations with other organizations, public and private.

14. Brian M. Burton and Kristin M. Lord, “Did the State Department Get the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review Right?” *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (Spring 2011).

15. QDDR, 201.

16. *Ibid.*, 28–29.

One problem among others with the CEO analogy for State, whether within the United States or abroad, is precisely that (except for USAID) the other agencies are not organizational subsidiaries of State. As the public rollout of the QDDR noted, “increasingly states’ domestic government agencies are increasingly [*sic*] working abroad to fulfill [their] mandate[s].”¹⁷ And then again in the QDDR itself: “We have seen astonishing growth in the number of civilian agencies that engage in international activity: energy diplomacy, disease prevention, police training, trade promotion, and many other areas.”¹⁸ Whether this is true for other countries, it certainly characterizes the United States. In the past two decades, domestic agencies have progressively increased their presence and programs abroad, sometimes in order to accomplish their purely domestic functions and sometimes because they want to contribute to similar, interlocking problems in other parts of the world. But they are departments and agencies independent of State and USAID. They do not report to the secretary of state.

Yet, the QDDR confidently asserts that, excluding those under a combatant commander and “other statutory exceptions,” “the Chief of Mission shall have full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of *all* U.S. government executive branch employees in that country” [emphasis added],¹⁹ which will come as a surprise to the other departments and agencies. Indeed, “chiefs of Mission lead the overall management effort at the country level and will be responsible for producing an Integrated Country Strategy involving all U.S. government agencies with programming in country (the MSRP currently serves as the planning tool and vehicle for this purpose).”²⁰ No doubt, every ambassador insists that he or she is the *president’s* representative to the foreign country, not the representative of the secretary of state, and therefore should have agency-wide writ. True, but mostly in the formal, not the practical, sense. Also true, the ambassador heads the country team, including representatives of other departments and agencies, but “heads” mostly involves deference and some authority, not directive power.

Ultimately any ambassador can order a U.S. government official to leave the country, *persona non grata*, but that is an extreme hardly ever employed, and certainly not over the details of the agency’s assistance program. The officials of U.S. departments and agencies abroad are still employees of those agencies and are accountable to their home offices. Especially when they are operating with their own appropriated funds, not State’s or USAID’s, they *report* to the ambassador only in the literal sense that they keep the ambassador informed, not in the sense (except in extraordinary cases if they were directly to contravene U.S. foreign policy or national security) that the ambassador can instruct them about what their department’s programs may or may not contain or can exercise direct supervisory responsibility for their person or their work.

Would this QDDR proposal change that reporting arrangement? Would it change the relation between State and its sister departments when those departments are operating abroad? If not, will the agencies other than State and USAID comply? Will State’s assertion of authority fly with

17. QDDR PowerPoint presentation, slide 5, <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/14727/state-department-diplomacy-and-development-review.pdf>. See also: “We have seen astonishing growth in the number of civilian agencies that engage in international activity: energy diplomacy, disease prevention, police training, trade promotion, and many other areas.” QDDR, ii.

18. QDDR, ii.

19. *Ibid.*, 134.

20. QDDR, 19. The MSRP is the Mission Strategic and Resource Plan, primarily the budget request, currently constructed by the country team under the ambassador’s leadership and signature. USAID produces its own country strategy, now called “country development cooperation strategy,” which would presumably be incorporated into the Integrated Country Strategy and the MSRP.

them? What would this mean? Would the ambassador as CEO have the authority necessary to set the entire strategy for U.S. assistance, to decide what each of the presumably subsidiary departments and agencies will do or not do, can therefore be fairly held “responsible for producing a truly Integrated Country Strategy “involving all U.S. government agencies with programming in the country”? Certainly a private-sector CEO would have exactly those responsibilities and the authorities to execute them, including the allocation of roles, responsibilities, and funds between (subsidiary) units, the ability to hire, fire, and promote, and so forth. But those powers exceed the more collegial relations under which most ambassadors function. Persuasion more than instruction characterizes most ambassadors’ relations with domestic departments and agencies.²¹ Finally, on the private-sector analogy, who would constitute the board of directors to which the CEO would report and how would that work?

Perhaps the answer to those questions lies in the PPD. Under President Obama’s decision, “the United States will...establish an Interagency Policy Committee on Global Development, led by the National Security Staff and reporting to the NSC Deputies and Principals, to set priorities, facilitate decision-making where agency positions diverge, and coordinate development policy across the executive branch, including the implementation of this PPD.”²² Naturally, the White House has the ultimate interagency authority and the NSC is the implementing agency of that authority. That is exactly the right place for truly integrating U.S. policy, not only for development (the subject of the PPD) but for diplomacy as well, although State’s lead in diplomacy is pretty much established even for technical questions. The NSC can convene interagency meetings and is precisely the venue for “facilitating” integration where agency positions diverge. Under an NSC determination, if necessary after a presidential decision, every department and agency will comply (or should) and the ambassador would have the authority to execute such a decision. But that could easily mean that far too many decisions go to the NSC staff and the Interagency Policy Committee than they are organized to handle.

Far more likely is a continuation with perhaps some minor modification of the present arrangements in which the ambassador has substantial authority, but less than a true CEO. If so, the grasp of the QDDR may prove less comprehensive than its reach, unless State “develops with agency partners a response framework that outlines agency roles and responsibilities and procedures for planning and responding to crisis”²³ and extends that procedure beyond crisis environments. As the QDDR itself says, the MSRP currently serves as the planning tool and vehicle for that purpose but organizing and compiling the plan is a bit short of empowering the ambassador as CEO.²⁴ Whether a CEO model can be made to work and perhaps even whether investing the authority to make those decisions is necessarily the best way to bring cohesion, a more integrated, less fractured approach to development would surely be desirable, as the past several secretaries of state have clearly recognized.

21. Some ambassadors have special authorities in countries of special importance or undergoing special conditions, such as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and now Egypt. But even in those countries, ambassadors are most likely to need to persuade rather than instruct or order. See, for example, Ronald Neumann, *The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2009).

22. PPD, 6.

23. QDDR, 207.

24. Of course, there is a danger of taking these proposals and analogies too literally. Yet two years went into discussions and production of the review. The resulting QDDR purports to be a plan to rectify deficiencies, notably including deficiencies of coordination. The CEO idea is a prominent feature of the proposed remedy. If that idea makes no substantial changes or only minor ones, if it is mostly symbolic, then the touted reforms amount to far less than they have been made to seem.

Engaging beyond the State

Sporadic acts of terrorism had already caused the curtailment of U.S. government outreach even before September 2001. For example, the former United States Information Agency (USIA) closed many if not most public libraries and centers, particularly in the Middle East, after several bombings and loss of life. These Jefferson or Lincoln centers contained small libraries with an emphasis on U.S. culture, history, and the like. Probably more important, they contained application and scholarship forms and general materials on U.S. colleges and universities. The staff was trained to answer questions and provide help. Located in urban centers, they were easily accessible, including to students who did not come from privileged families, and they opened the United States to those students.

The public footprint of the U.S. government contracted even more sharply after September 2001. Partly out of concern for terrorism and general insecurity in foreign cities with growing crime rates, embassies and USAID missions were re-enforced, greater restrictions were placed on who could gain access to them, under what conditions, and for what purposes, security measures were multiplied at their entrances, and many were rebuilt and relocated far from urban centers and with enormous setbacks. Staff residences too were relocated to safer apartments and houses with greater security and often within bricked and gated communities. Security concerns and the decisions of security officers became and remain primary. Casualties triggered automatic security investigations to see whether the ambassador had been sufficiently cautious. The safest professional posture was lockdown. Justifiable or not, from the perspective of host populations, the United States was perceived to be relocating in a bunker mentality. The ability of U.S. officers abroad to mingle, to create and maintain relations with local citizens, to understand the local context, and to represent the United States abroad has suffered accordingly.

All of this, ironically, just as the U.S. military has learned the importance of exactly the opposite—getting out into the countryside, mingling with local leaders, foregoing the bunker—and precisely in those areas of highest risk: where they are engaged in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. Air power and armor are crucial but clearly not decisive. The military understands quite well that there cannot be a forward defense without risk. And real risk is not an abstract concept. Operating effectively in an environment of real risk means taking some casualties—not lightly, certainly not indifferently or negligently, but purposefully, consciously, and calculatingly.

So at precisely the time when diplomacy and development are being reconceived as part of national security, the traditional arm of national security is moving out from bunkers and taking increased risks while diplomats and development professionals are moving into bunkers in order to take fewer risks.

It is difficult to tell because the language is vague, but the QDDR may be reversing that trend. “It is increasingly important for American diplomats to meet not only with their foreign ministry counterparts but also with tribal elders or local authorities...and engage with citizens, groups, and organizations...[including] the activists, organizations, congregations, and journalists who work through peaceful means to make their countries better.”²⁵ An outreach principle applied to diplomats applies doubly to development officers, who have projects with many of these groups and individuals both within and outside the capital.

25. QDDR, 59.

If U.S. interests are insufficiently served when its officers are confined to the capital city, it is because important aspects of the host country, including much of its population, are located beyond the capital, and because important U.S. interests are served by engaging those people and aspects directly and personally. Those interests will also be served by engaging more fully and systematically with parts of the host society outside the state and its officials: “beyond the halls of government office buildings,”²⁶ those in that vague area of “civil society,” as the QDDR notes, in business, religious groups, the media, education, and NGOs more generally. They will not be adequately engaged between 8:30 and 4:30 behind barricaded walls, consulates, and compounds. The clear implication here, although not explicit, is that U.S. interests are insufficiently served when its officers are excessively confined to the capital, let alone within it.

If, hopefully, that is the intention of the QDDR, it will call for a welcome and wholesale reassessment of mission, security, incentives, and operating procedures. It will call for a different risk profile and a different tolerance of risks. It should eventuate in a substantial modification, even reversal, of current policy. It will call for a redesign of incentives and training, maybe just a dusting-off of some old policies and procedures. It would be easy to find and enlist older foreign-service officers who would be more than willing to help. But without doubt, engaging beyond the state and beyond walled compounds and embassies will eventuate in greater risks and inevitably in some casualties. So it should be undertaken soberly and purposefully with, as they say, eyes wide open.

Organizing the State Department and Rebuilding USAID as the Preeminent Global Development Institution

The two sets of internal organizational changes laid out in the QDDR relate to State and USAID. In addition to engaging societies rather than just their governments, the contemporary context requires fundamental organizational changes—structural, procedural, and perhaps most important, cultural—in both. For both State and USAID, the QDDR begins with broad organizational themes and concerns, yet the actual modifications are much less sweeping. “The changing global context and today’s pressing challenges require a different approach and distinct capabilities,” says the QDDR PowerPoint presentation about State.²⁷ The “QDDR response: To streamline operations and improve outcomes, consolidate functional issues and regional bureaus.”²⁸ The QDDR itself is a bit more reserved than the PowerPoint presentation but still under the overall section “Marshalling Expertise to Address 21st Century Challenges”: “The challenges of the 21st century demand both traditional skills and specialized knowledge and experience.”²⁹ However, an entire chapter of the QDDR, one of six, is devoted to global trends, reshaping the global context of U.S. foreign policy, and guiding policy principles. The following chapter is devoted to adapting to the new global landscape. Needed presumably is not just some sail trimming, not just some consolidation or tinkering, but a full rethinking.

The actual proposals for State amount, in effect, to reorganizing and renaming two existing undersecretaryships. The current undersecretary for economic affairs would become the undersecretary for economic growth, energy, and business affairs. The environment portfolio would move from the old undersecretary for democracy and global affairs to the new and expanded

26. Ibid., Introductory letter from Secretary Clinton.

27. QDDR PowerPoint presentation, slide 10.

28. Ibid.

29. QDDR, 163.

bureau, which would also include a higher profile for energy. Meanwhile the old and now somewhat diminished democracy and global affairs position becomes the under secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights with the addition of “civilian security.” Civilian security consists primarily of the old coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization, who at least on the organizational chart reported directly to the secretary of state. Organizationally a few offices move and get perhaps a slightly higher profile and two undersecretaries get new titles and portfolios.³⁰ But if “the changing global context and today’s pressing challenges require a different approach and distinct capabilities,” these modifications seem a bit anemic as the response. Moreover, since undersecretaries require senatorial confirmation and since they will be requesting funding from both houses, they will need congressional concurrence as well.

The declared ambition for USAID is even greater. USAID has been allowed to deteriorate, note the PPD and QDDR implicitly.³¹ But President Obama intends to “reestablish the United States as the global leader on international development...” An entire chapter of the QDDR is devoted to “Elevating and Transforming Development to Deliver Results, which highlights our efforts to re-establish USAID as the world’s preeminent development agency...”³² and “which entails a long-term commitment to rebuilding USAID as the U.S. government’s lead development agency—and as the world’s premier development agency...” [emphasis added].³³ The actual instruments for doing so consist of building USAID’s human capital, building USAID’s strategic capital and operational capacity by “establishing development policy and strategic planning capacity,”³⁴ and elevating USAID’s voice.³⁵ In fact, that USAID’s independent policy and planning capacity existed for decades until the Bush administration modified it and moved it to State. So the former Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination will be restored and enlarged into a new Bureau for Policy and Learning. Second, it consists of restoring to USAID its former, independent budget function so that it can at least form and propose its own budget, although budget and policy remain in separate USAID entities whereas they should be integrated.³⁶ Third, it consists of restoring an

30. A few other changes, even less momentous, are also proposed, for example, a new senior adviser for civil society and emerging democracies reporting directly to the secretary. Exactly how that new advisory position relates to the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, let alone the new under secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, is not clear. Work with and for civil society is normally part of democracy programming where, already, there are overlapping mandates between DRL, the Middle East Partnership Initiative in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and, of course USAID. So at least in this area, the desire to consolidate and clarify has resulted in yet another office independent of the others.

31. “In development, we are *re-establishing* USAID as the world’s premier development agency” [emphasis added], QDDR, Introductory letter from Secretary Clinton. See also: “...which highlights our efforts to re-establish USAID as the world’s preeminent development agency,” QDDR, iv; “President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and Administrator Shah have committed to rebuilding USAID as the world’s preeminent development agency,” QDDR, xi; “We will rebuild the United States Agency for International Development as the world’s premier development agency,” QDDR, 21; “Reestablishing our leadership in global development also entails a long-term commitment to rebuilding USAID as the U.S. government’s lead development agency...” QDDR, 76; “Second, we will build USAID into a world-class development agency...” QDDR, 76; “III. Building USAID as the Premier Development Agency,” QDDR, 107.

32. QDDR, iv.

33. PPD, 6.

34. QDDR, Chapter 3, III, 109.

35. Ibid., “Chapter 3 Elevating and Transforming Development to Achieve Results; III. Building USAID as the Premier Development Agency.”

36. Without budget responsibility, the policy entity remains too weak; and without policy, the budget entity is too likely to become an accountancy shop. If the budget shop attempts to use funding to establish

even older Bureau for Science and Technology into a new office of the same name. Note the verbs, however. These modifications *restore* the old status quo ante by reversing several incomprehensible and, to say the least, ill-advised decisions of the Bush administration's director of foreign assistance. The restoration and reversal are welcome, without doubt, but surely more will be needed if USAID is to be rebuilt into the world's premier development agency.

A few other changes are contemplated to help do so. By charging a 1 percent fee for USAID procurements, a World Capital Fund is proposed,³⁷ but there are no details either about the fund itself or about who should pay the procurement fee, since it is USAID itself that provides the funds for its procurements. As to procurements, the QDDR announces an intention to "balance our workforces...[in order to] have the appropriate mix of direct-hire personnel and contractors so that the U.S. government is setting the priorities and making the key policy decisions"³⁸ rather than relying so heavily on contractors. Already USAID has been recruiting many more direct hires, in part to make up for the many who retired without replacement and those now eligible to retire. This is a complicated area, not a simple one, with costs and benefits on both sides of the direct-hire/contractor division precisely to get the appropriate balance. "Much of what used to be the exclusive work of government has been sourced to private actors, both for-profit and not-for-profit," notes the QDDR.³⁹

To ensure that only the public interest applies and to fix responsibility within the government, the law requires that only direct hires can perform "inherently governmental functions," a phrase of legal art. What constitutes "inherently governmental functions" is constantly under discussion, including the extent to which contractors working under the direct supervision of a direct hire can "help" the direct hire. At the policy level, contractors are often more expensive than direct hires, at least in the short term, but they can be terminated when the need expires, while direct hires have tenure for life. To the extent that the twenty-first century is under constant flux, as the QDDR emphasizes, flexibility at some initial cost may be cost-effective over the longer term. Finally, for both USAID and State, the QDDR proposes augmented recruiting, training, and retention programs to "build and rebalance the workforce," to construct a "21st Century Workforce," and to align "personnel and procurement with strategic objectives"⁴⁰ But again, apart from generalities, for example about the need for specialists and for quick recruitment and the like, there are few details about what exactly is needed and why, and what the strategic objectives are with which personnel and procurement need aligning and rebalancing, let alone how the goals will be accomplished. As already noted, fuller strategy discussion would have begun with a discussion of exactly what the new twenty-first-century challenges are and what is needed to address them.

policy, it steps on the policy shop's feet, and if policy attempts to impose funding criteria, the budget shop will call foul. They should be integrated. It has been personality more than rationality that has kept them separate.

37. QDDR, 181–82.

38. *Ibid.*, 179.

39. *Ibid.*, 177.

40. QDDR PowerPoint presentation, slide 6. The QDDR itself is again less sweeping: "Procurement systems, which have an enormous impact on development outcomes, must be updated so that procurement itself furthers development objectives." QDDR, 114.

Continuities

Notwithstanding their advertisement of reform, difference, and departure, the PPD and QDDR come to surprisingly similar conclusions as earlier administrations or, more accurately, point to similar problems and challenges that, having been identified, have still not been adequately addressed.

Diplomacy and Development: Mutually Reinforcing

“Diplomacy and development are mutually reinforcing. Effective development helps stabilize countries, which makes them more effective diplomatic partners. And effective diplomacy strengthens the collaboration between our countries, which helps advance our shared development goals.”⁴¹ This first principle permeated the approaches of the Clinton, Bush and now Obama administrations’ guiding the presumed symbiosis between these two civilian endeavors and therefore between the Department of State and USAID whose respective “core missions” they are.⁴²

For precisely those reasons, at least one organizational issue simmering over several years now seems definitively settled by both the Bush and Obama administrations, and in exactly the same way. A series of articles during the Bush administration argued for an independent, cabinet-level development agency.⁴³ If forced to choose, the emphasis was more on the independence than on the cabinet-level. A truly independent development agency was the basic goal. The critique had to do with a long-standing and somewhat agonizing bureaucratic journey for USAID from an independent agency through a period of partial subordination (the so-called dotted-line reporting) by the USAID administrator to the secretary of state during the second Clinton administration to the full subordination and complete reporting during the second George W. Bush admin-

41. QDDR, xii.

42. Others have commented on the extent to which developed countries are in fact effective diplomatic partners, especially when the national interests of strong countries with independent means diverge. The United States has sometimes found its most constant partners among some of the poorer countries whose core diplomatic interests are sometimes more consistent with those of the United States and who are dependent on U.S. subsidies and preferences of various kinds.

43. See, for example: *Why the U.S. Needs a Department for Global and Human Development* (Washington, DC: InterAction, June 2008), www.interaction.org/files.cgi/6304_Cabinet-level_summary.pdf; *Proposed Major Components and Organization of a Cabinet-level Department for Global and Human Development* (Washington, DC: InterAction, June 2008), http://www.interaction.org/files.cgi/6306_Cabinetlevel_org_paper.pdf; Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, *New Day, New Way: U.S. Foreign Assistance for the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2008), <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/16210>; Steve Radalet, “Modernizing Foreign Assistance for the 21st Century: An Agenda for the Next U.S. President,” Center for Global Development, March 2008, www.cgdev.org/publications/detail/15561; J. Brian Atwood, M. Peter McPherson, and Andrew Natsios, “Arrested Development,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (November/December 2008) (calling for either a separate development agency or a revitalized and more independent U.S. Agency for International Development); Sheila Herrling and Steve Radalet, *U.S. Foreign Assistance for the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, August 2008), <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/16559>; Lael Brainard, “Organizing Foreign Assistance to Meet Twenty-First Century Challenges,” in *Security by Other Means*, ed. Lael Brainard, table 2-2, 33–66 (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

istration.⁴⁴ President Obama has seemingly sided with President Bush notwithstanding that some of the authors of the articles calling for independence now have relatively senior positions in the Obama administration, including the White House. “The Administrator will report to the Secretary of State who will ensure that development and diplomacy are effectively coordinated and mutually reinforcing in the operation of foreign policy.”⁴⁵ Although no issue ever dies definitively in Washington, two presidents, from two parties, in succeeding administrations have now decided that the USAID administrator will report directly to the secretary of state, so that would now seem to be settled policy. Moreover both presidents placed development within the orbit of—that is, as an element of—foreign policy and national security. So there, too, development is not an independent pursuit but part of U.S. foreign policy and national security, and it will be considered through those lenses.

Nevertheless, a substantial amount of the QDDR is devoted to the still-unfinished business of integrating the two organizations around these common purposes. Attention is devoted, in particular, to State whose central task and consequent precepts for personal advancement have rarely included contributions to development.⁴⁶ However, now “with this interdependency in mind, we will commit more of our senior diplomats’ time to advancing development issues...[and] build ‘development diplomacy’ as a discipline at State.”⁴⁷ It will take incentives, like promotion precepts, not just time to integrate diplomacy and development more fully.

Important as well will be the clarification both of divisions of labor between State and USAID but also the integration of those divisions. The “whole of government” approach depends on cooperation as well as specialization. Ideally, the various entities avoid duplication yet benefit from one another’s specialties. Concentration may be the right concept. As noted, any debate about the complete independence of USAID should now be moot. However, the QDDR does suggest a division of labor in the area of conflict that should be unsettling to USAID. At least in that context if not others:

“[T]he State Department will lead for operations responding to political and security crises, while USAID will lead for operations in response to humanitarian crises resulting from large-scale natural or industrial disasters, famines, disease outbreaks and other natural phenomena”;

“the State Department will lead operations in response to political and security crises and conflicts...[while] USAID will lead operations in response to humanitarian crises”;

“...when State leads operations in response to a political or security crisis, it will provide *direction on objectives and resources* to be deployed, but USAID will retain operational control over how to deploy its resources to the field” [emphasis added].⁴⁸

The division of labor for a host of other matters is left uncovered, but it suggests that State will make the policy and USAID will implement it. If so, it would reinforce those, particularly at State,

44. See, Gerald F. Hyman, *Foreign Policy and Development: Structure, Process, Policy, and the Drip-by-Drip Erosion of USAID* (Washington, DC: CSIS, September 2010), http://csis.org/files/publication/100923_Hyman_ForeignPolicyAndDevel_Web.pdf.

45. PPD, 5–6.

46. As the definitely “junior partner,” USAID officers were almost never looked to for diplomatic missions and USAID’s precepts for personal advancement almost never contain contributions to diplomacy.

47. QDDR, xii, 117.

48. QDDR, xiii, 133.

who believe that in general State should set policy, define budget, and decide on programs and that USAID should just be implementational, indeed just a bit above clerical. That would hardly accord with the president's conception of "rebuilding USAID...as the world's premier development agency..."⁴⁹

Conflict Prevention and Response as a Core Mission

September 2001 made conflict and terrorism more central concerns for both State and USAID. Without doubt, conflict was an apprehension for both well before al Qaeda struck New York, Washington, and Shanksville but it did not occupy the center of attention. After that strike, it did. What made for conflict? How did it spread? How could it be contained? Most important, how did it affect its neighbors and the globe, especially the United States? There was a scramble for materials on conflict. The usual task forces were created. Afghanistan became the most important country, of course, and then Iraq. At USAID, the concentration on "sustainable development" and "sustainable development countries" of the Clinton administration gave way to exactly the opposite: a concentration to the point of preoccupation with "fragile states." Countries like Ghana or Vietnam were relegated by USAID to some bureaucratic closet or, the functional equivalent, to the Millennium Development Corporation.⁵⁰ The Bureau for Humanitarian Response became the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. USAID created several new offices: the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and (later) the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) and the Office of Military Affairs (to liaise with the Department of Defense). A similar shift occurred at State, mostly within the regional bureaus but also in the functional ones. Perhaps most noteworthy was the creation by the Bush administration in 2004 of the coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization, who reported to neither one but rather directly to the secretary responsible for liaising with the military and also for creating a civil response capacity to complement the military in areas of conflict.

The QDDR goes even farther or, if not, at least makes it clear that conflict will be central for both diplomacy and development. An entire chapter, one out of five, is entitled "Preventing and Responding to Crisis, Conflict and Instability." In case there remains any doubt, its main subsection is entitled "Embrace Conflict Prevention and Response...as a Core Civilian Mission." Note the words "embrace," "preventing," and "prevention." Conflict prevention is now a *core* mission and one not merely to be assumed reluctantly, hesitatingly, or timorously, but rather to be *embraced*. The need for that emphasis exposes the concern that more traditional themes and associated postings—the established allies and adversaries, proliferation, new powers, multinational agencies, all the work of more traditional diplomacy—will be less valued by a new emphasis on instability. This was the case not just in Iraq (now the location of the largest U.S. embassy) or Afghanistan (now the largest assistance recipient never mind the location of over 130,000 troops in a hot war), but also in places like Yemen, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Haiti. Both Secretary Condoleezza Rice and

49. PDD, 6; QDDR, Introductory letter from Secretary Clinton, also 21.

50. In fairness, USAID's budget for such countries paled in comparison with the MCC budget. Indeed, there was unresolved disagreement about whether a country with an MCC program should also have a USAID program (i.e., should the existing USAID program continue even if modified if the country also had a much larger MCC compact program?). In that environment, USAID was in effect marginalized, and conversely, had to decide whether to allocate scarce funds to projects in the country that were not part of the MCC compact (say, education) or reallocate those funds to other, comparatively less well-resourced countries.

Secretary Clinton have called for a reallocation of personnel from “traditional” postings in Europe or Japan to Africa and South Asia.

The swing of emphasis has almost certainly gone too far and the goals are almost certainly too ambitious. Afghanistan is still a relatively minor country. As between Iran on its west and Pakistan on its east and even Central Asia on its north, Afghanistan is not likely to sway world dynamics no matter what happens to the Taliban, who, in any event, have no global objectives. Europe, Asia, and Latin America still make a lot more difference to those global dynamics. Proliferation is still a larger threat than intra-country or even some regional conflicts. A better, fuller discussion of threats and strategy would have revealed that.

More important, perhaps, even if conflicts were so central to U.S. national interests, the ambition of the QDDR to *prevent* them is clearly beyond the reach of diplomacy or development or U.S. power except in the unusual case. “Investments in civilian activities today can avert costly military interventions tomorrow,” says the QDDR PowerPoint presentation.⁵¹ The assertion was repeated somewhat less sweepingly in the QDDR itself: “Where our diplomacy, development, and defense work together to prevent state weakness or failure, we avert the need to commit overwhelming military resources or provide exceptional humanitarian relief efforts”; “[t]hey [the administration and Congress] see that an investment in the diplomacy and development workforce today can help avoid costly interventions down the road.”⁵² Taken at face value rather than as rhetoric, these are astonishing claims. What is the evidence for any of this? No one knows how to avoid these conflicts, or even much about ameliorating them. They are almost always deeply rooted in history, culture, society, and power. Many are expressions of hundreds of years of competition, enmity, and even warfare. Others are the consequence of resource distributions (wealth, minerals, land, access, water). Some in fact are the results of the diplomacy itself, the diplomacy of European powers about borders. Maybe diplomacy and development can help avoid some and contain or mitigate others. But the numbers are almost certainly small perhaps because the tools for doing so are weak compared to the challenges.

The QDDR response to conflict, the tools it proposes, is to “[s]trengthen security and justice sector assistance capability as key prevention and response tool [*sic*].”⁵³ “Security and justice sector assistance brackets both ends of the spectrum of conflict prevention and response....” As the QDDR notes, “The first job of any government is to secure the physical safety of its citizens.” The QDDR goes to “bracket” conflict prevention with “comprehensive, balanced security and justice sector assistance programs that integrate military assistance and reform, policing, and justice sector institutions” as part of “complementary and interconnected elements of a comprehensive approach to building the capacity of states to maintain domestic stability under responsible democratic governments.” However, this is not the same as preventing, avoiding, and maybe only infrequently mitigating conflict. Yet, by devoting one out of five chapters to the prevention of conflict, crisis, and instability, the QDDR seems to elevate them beyond more traditional challenges and certainly beyond national capabilities. Doing so risks future disappointment about ineffectiveness.⁵⁴

Perhaps equally interesting, given the organizational emphasis of the QDDR, is the proposed division of labor noted above between State and USAID at least with respect to conflict. To repeat but for a somewhat different purpose,

51. QDDR PowerPoint presentation, slide 18.

52. QDDR, 17, 161.

53. QDDR PowerPoint presentation, slide 18.

54. QDDR, 128 and 134.

[T]he State Department will lead operations in response to political and security crises and conflicts where there is a challenge to or a breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict or destabilizing activities by state or non-state actors [and both for persistent and acute conflict and instability]. USAID will lead operations in response to humanitarian crises resulting from large-scale natural or industrial disasters, famines, disease outbreaks, and other natural phenomena. Notwithstanding this division of labor, *both* agencies have critical roles to play in both contexts [emphasis original].⁵⁵

Oddly, USAID, which has had decades of experience at least attempting to deal firsthand with persistent and acute conflicts of all kinds, is relegated here to leading only those that result from national disasters. Meanwhile State, which has little operational capacity, will lead in all other areas of crisis, conflict, and instability.⁵⁶

How that reflects the joint State/USAID partnership is puzzling, unless, again as already noted, State is to be the primary agency, setting the agenda, making the decisions, creating the policies, and leading the effort, while USAID is its implementing arm, except for natural disasters, which, in any event, are hardly challenges for U.S. foreign or security policy. There are few policy issues related to natural disasters. Even the plethora of insurgent organizations posed no challenge to disaster relief efforts in the recent floods in Pakistan, no matter who provided the efforts. Of course, “*both* agencies have critical roles to play in both contexts” but State’s critical role seems to be to lead and USAID’s seems to be to follow. And if that is the division of labor in areas like crisis, conflict, and instability, what would be the proposed division of labor in countries with relative stability or countries key to U.S. national interests? How exactly will that division of labor work, then, if one purpose of the QDDR is to lay out the strategies by which diplomacy and development are coequal with one another and with defense?

By far the larger, longer question is not between State and USAID but between their combined resources/roles/efforts and those of the military. No matter what the division of labor, both State and USAID have together been trying to create a sustainable civilian capacity to complement Defense and the military in dealing with conflict generally and counterinsurgency in particular. For years, the military in Iraq and Afghanistan requested many more civilian personnel for local development projects to support its respective counterinsurgency efforts. The military has some assets of its own to do so, notably its civil-affairs officers and reservists, some of whom are mayors, engineers, economists, and the like, but it has recognized that civilians and civilian agencies, not the military, should be meeting these needs. If they do not, however, the military has been clear that it will create those capacities within its own ranks, including its reserves. Foreign-service

55. Ibid., 133. As to the USAID role, “[t]his approach reaffirms the 1993 Executive Order designating the USAID Administrator as the U.S. government’s International Disaster Relief Coordinator, with broad responsibilities to lead all agencies in U.S. government disaster response. USAID will also drive the humanitarian response under State’s overall lead when such disasters occur in acute political and security situations, such as the floods in Pakistan in the summer of 2010.” Ibid.

56. Two USAID offices in particular have had direct responsibility for and experience in dealing with conflict, the Office of Transition Initiative and the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. Other than the coordinator for stabilization and reconstruction, no unit at State has had comparable responsibility or experience. If State is to take the lead on all nonhumanitarian aspects of conflict, presumably OTI and CMM would be transferred from USAID to State. Several other USAID “technical offices” have also been directly engaged in programs dealing with conflict or in mitigating it, but only as part of their responsibilities. Presumably they would remain at USAID. Perhaps not unreasonably, those details are not elaborated in a policy document like the QDDR.

officers at State and USAID are routinely induced, virtually begged, to bid on tours in Critical Priority Countries (currently Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan).⁵⁷ Some volunteer. Most try almost desperately to avoid doing so because those who bid will almost surely be assigned to those countries. So, to avoid unilaterally assigning officers, the negotiations are protracted and the incentives are many. The assignments last usually only for a year, with four to five leaves for rest and recreation outside the country and for home leave. Most get first choice for any post-conflict assignment they can even colorably encumber. As a last resort, foreign-service officers, who have agreed to “worldwide service,” can be assigned (or threatened with assignment) to the Critical Priority Countries.

Even more problematic, though, is what happens when they get to the country. They are confined, entombed really, in gigantic, isolated, and ever-growing compounds from which they rarely leave. Streets are barricaded, large areas are walled-off, they get from one part of the compound to the other through tunnels and mazes, little-Americas from which they presumably direct and manage the civilian dimension of the conflict through contractors and NGOs. They need never set foot outside these citadels, indeed are often prevented from doing so even if they have the interest and desire. The humongous Green (International) Zone in Baghdad with the new “largest U.S. embassy in the world” is only the prototype, albeit the biggest one as well. Hardly any American civilian officials left or were allowed to leave that walled city. It is preposterous to pretend to be embracing, preventing, or even mitigating conflict while holing up in forts.

All of this on the civilian side stands in contrast to the military, which assigns units and in general does not ask for volunteers to meet its basic needs in these countries. Three and four reenlistments for one to two years each are not unusual, nor are “stop orders” under which units scheduled to rotate out of the country are instead told to unpack and remain. Certainly military officers are assigned more than one-year tours, which, everyone understands, cannot possibly meet the need. It takes well over a year just to understand the context and forge the personal connections.

One response has been the coordinator for stabilization and reconstruction, who is assigned to build a Civilian Response Corps, train it, and deploy it to augment the career foreign-service officers of State and USAID and the military. The coordinator now has some 150 actively employed staff and another 1,200 on reserve. There have been some successes but nowhere near the level required to augment the military sufficiently. Without substantial changes, success will continue to be elusive.

But if conflict prevention or even conflict management (including counterinsurgencies) is a core mission of State and USAID, it simply cannot be accomplished with protracted negotiations and inducements leading to one-year assignments, especially to the most important conflicts. The military expects more of its officers. If the civilian side truly expects to complement, let alone replace, military officers, it will need to do better.⁵⁸

57. Haiti is apparently being considered as a fourth Critical Priority Country but has not (yet) been added.

58. The differences between military and civilian responses may have been noticed by President Obama himself. Without making explicit comparisons, it is instructive to note his remarks to the August 2011 annual conference of the American Legion: “Today, as we near this solemn [tenth] anniversary, it’s fitting that we salute the extraordinary decade of service rendered by the 9/11 Generation—the more than 5 million Americans who’ve worn the uniform over the past 10 years. They were there, on duty, that September morning, having enlisted in a time of peace, but they instantly transitioned to a war footing. They’re the millions of recruits who have stepped forward since, seeing their nation at war and saying, ‘Send me.’ They’re every

Focus

One of the many advantages of a clear strategy is the ability to rank alternative tactics, deduce priorities, and allocate resources: To what extent does a proposed course of action contribute to the core of the strategy? To what extent is it secondary or even a diversion? What advances the central strategic plan the most? What detracts from it? Absent a clear strategy, many courses seem promising or disappointing, none necessarily more than the others.

Perennial at both State and USAID is the (so far futile) search for priority and focus. Every review recommends greater focus and prioritization. Every secretary and administrator supports them in theory. Each has announced that “we cannot do everything and be everywhere; we will need to make choices; under this administration, we will focus and concentrate our attention and resources.” Focus and concentrate has been the buzzword slogan of one administration after the next. Each announces the same aspiration because, to date, no predecessor has succeeded. Now the president has also weighed in, and for exactly the same reasons: “Over the last several decades, trade-offs among competing development objectives have been made implicitly rather than explicitly, and the effectiveness of U.S. development efforts has been weakened as a result. President Obama will focus U.S. development efforts to maximize the impact of our investments and policies.”⁵⁹ So “the United States will make hard choices about how to allocate attention and resources across countries, regions, and sectors.”⁶⁰

The QDDR is in a way the implementing document of the president’s policy, but unfortunately fares no better, perhaps even worse than predecessor administrations because it is so emphatic about the need for difficult choices, again a common ambition. “And we will make the tradeoffs and hard choices required to ensure that we invest wisely.”⁶¹ At least for development, there are but three or four possible ways to focus and concentrate.

single soldier, sailor, airman, Marine and Coast Guardsman serving today, who has volunteered to serve in a time of war, knowing that they could be sent into harm’s way. They’ve learned the cultures and traditions and languages of the places where they served. Trained to fight, they’ve also taken on the role of diplomats and mayors and development experts, negotiating with tribal sheikhs, working with village shuras, partnering with communities. Young captains, sergeants, lieutenants—they’ve assumed responsibilities once reserved for more senior commanders, and reminding us that in an era when so many other institutions have shirked their obligations, the men and women of the United States military welcome responsibility. In a decade of war, they’ve borne an extraordinary burden, with more than 2 million of our service members deploying to the warzones. Hundreds of thousands have deployed again and again, year after year. Never before has our nation asked so much of our all-volunteer force—the one percent of Americans who wears the uniform,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/30/remarks-president-93rd-annual-conference-american-legion>. References by President Obama to the extraordinary yet voluntary sacrifices of the military all stand in stark contrast to the labored efforts at both State and USAID to recruit anyone at all, let alone for multiple tours, multiple years, and well outside embassy compounds: the “send me” mentality; the 2 million who have been sent into warzones; “the more than 6,200 Americans in uniform who have given their lives”; their lengthy and repeated deployments; the learning of local cultures, traditions, and languages by living in often-isolated, far-flung villages and outposts; “their role as diplomats and mayors and development experts”; and (pointedly) the “other institutions that have shirked their obligations.” The comparisons may be unfair in some respects, but not if State and USAID intend to “embrace conflict prevention” as a “core mission” and not if they intend to take over “civilian functions” otherwise being performed by the military.

59. PPD, 2.

60. Ibid., 4.

61. QDDR, xix.

First, the United States could reduce the areas of programming. President Obama himself supports that approach: “[T]he United States will...focus our expertise in a smaller number of sectors, with an emphasis on selectivity and an orientation toward results.”⁶² “We will focus our efforts in sectors and places in which we have a comparative advantage to maximize our impact and enhance our leadership.”⁶³ In fact the QDDR lists the areas for U.S. focus: food security, global health, global climate change, sustainable economic growth, democracy and governance, and humanitarian assistance.⁶⁴ Except for somewhat different emphases, these are almost exactly the same sectors that the Obama administrator inherited from the George W. Bush administration, which in turn inherited them from the Clinton administration and, before that, the George H. W. Bush administration. USAID has worked in these same sectors for, now, at least four administrations. Apparently two other sectors—education and gender—have been eliminated. But not to worry, they have only *apparently* been scratched. Both sectors are still alive and quite well. In fact, they are both USAID “priorities.” Education is an office of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade. Gender also continues as a “cross-cutting issue” just as it has for, again, the past few administrations, in fact now as a priority. Indeed gender itself is a focus: “We will...focus on gender equality and elevate investment in women and girls, which is important in its own right and a way to maximize results across the board.” “[W]omen are at the center of our diplomacy and development effort—not simply as beneficiaries, but also as agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth, and stability.”⁶⁵

So much for sectoral focus. Nothing new. No greater focus. Actually, there is one new development, one change in sectoral programming, but it is an expansion rather than a contraction, less focus rather than more. Agriculture, which had been all but eliminated from USAID’s programming, will now be resurrected, particularly through the president’s Feed the Future initiative, assuming it is funded. A good case can be made that programs in agriculture, including applied research for better crops and methods, should never have been reduced. The decision to restore agriculture may be the right one, but it is not a decision to increase sectoral focus. As to the assertion that somehow these sectors represent U.S. comparative advantages as against other donors, the claim might come as something of a surprise to the other donors, especially since these areas comprise the vast amount of development assistance, not just by the United States but by all the donors.

Second, the United States could reduce the number of countries in which it is working. It could close some embassies or USAID missions. It could consolidate some embassies or missions into regional platforms serving multiple countries, especially small countries. One obvious way is presented by President Obama: “[S]ustainable development is a long-term proposition, and progress depends importantly on the choices of political leaders and the quality of institutions in developing countries. Where leaders govern responsibly, set in place good policies, and make invest-

62. PPD, 5.

63. QDDR, 21.

64. Ibid., Chapter 3, 76, adding that “[t]hroughout each of these elevate and refine our approach to women and girls.” As to USAID in particular, it will also “focus” on the same areas in which it has been working for three decades or more: “In addition to leading Presidential Initiatives in two of these sectors—*food security* and, upon meeting specified benchmarks, *global health*—USAID will also focus on three further development areas of comparative strength: *sustainable economic growth, democracy and governance, and humanitarian assistance*. Throughout each of these areas, we will strengthen our emphasis on empowering and *creating opportunities for women*” [emphasis added]. Ibid., 87.

65. Ibid., xi and 23.

ments conducive to development, sustainable outcomes can be achieved. Where those conditions are absent, it is difficult to engineer sustained progress, no matter how good our intentions or the extent of our engagement.”⁶⁶ The number of countries in which USAID has an office, never mind a program, is stunning—nearly a hundred.⁶⁷ In fact, outside the developed countries of the OECD, there are perhaps a dozen, no more than two dozen, in which USAID does not have a program or office.⁶⁸ The number of those countries that have set in place good policies and made investments conducive to sustainable development outcomes is, if not miniscule, then at the most optimistic a small fraction of the “presence countries.”

The United States could simply remove its assistance in those countries whose leaders do not govern responsibly, set in place good policies, and make investments conducive to development. That would not go over so well at USAID, because there would then be little if any difference between USAID and the MCC, but it accords with President Obama’s wise principle. The United States could also retain assistance, notwithstanding a poor prognosis for development progress, in countries in which it has offsetting, substantial national interests, countries like Pakistan or Egypt. In the national interest countries, it would probably be more accurate to call the funding “foreign aid” rather than “development assistance” and then to develop appropriate criteria for amounts, distributions, and programs. But doing so would probably be insufficiently diplomatic because it would accurately call these countries by their proper descriptions, which is hardly ever a good idea for diplomacy. Under these criteria, honestly applied, the number of countries with U.S. development assistance programs would be substantially reduced and focused. The QDDR provides two helpful maps: one of the countries in which there is a U.S. embassy, consulate, or office⁶⁹ and one of the countries in which there is a USAID presence or program.⁷⁰ A wagering person could probably do quite well betting against closures.

A third option for focus is more complicated: a surgical scalpel rather than a butcher’s cleaver. Depending on the country conditions (including willingness to reform), U.S. interests, the programs of other donors, and the like, the United States could focus on certain sectors or programs within that country and reduce or eliminate others. It need not do every program in every country. That option would depend on a rigorous analysis of the country and on a country ceiling for assistance. The ceiling could be allocated between sectors and programs pursuant to the analysis. In theory that has been the U.S. approach over at least the past four administrations. Unfortunately, it has not produced much focus as each sector has argued, usually successfully, that it should be part of the mix.

With some exceptions, budgets have increased rather than decreased, as has the number of funded sectors in each country. Incentives would need to change substantially before any focus could be wrung out of the existing system using this theoretically far-better approach. After an unfortunate hiatus in the second term of the Bush administration, Secretary Clinton and Administrator Shah have reintroduced Integrated Country Strategies and Development Cooperation Strategies “implemented under Chief of Mission authority.”⁷¹ Returning to the procedures before

66. PPD, 2.

67. QDDR map, 77, <http://www.usaid.gov/locations/missiondirectory.html#N>.

68. See USAID’s own map at <http://www.usaid.gov/locations>.

69. QDDR, 27.

70. *Ibid.*, 77.

71. *Ibid.*, 33. In general, see Chapter 5 (“Working Smarter: Reforming our Personnel, Procurement and Planning Capabilities to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century”), Section III. (“Planning, Budgeting and

the reforms under Secretary Rice, the strategies will be designed and proposed by the posts and missions, not by Washington. A necessary but insufficient condition, this third option for focus depends on the rigor and integrity applied to the country-based process and strategy. It holds the promise for greater focus but in the past, to repeat, it was too often an unfulfilled promise. But this is a new day, as they say.

The fourth option is the one beloved by those at the upper reaches of the administration and in Congress: do more with less. The QDDR version of the same approach: “We can work smarter and better...” With slight variation, the working-smarter formulation appears six times in the QDDR, including the whole of Chapter 5. State and USAID will work smarter by setting clear priorities, managing for results, holding ourselves accountable, unifying our efforts, maximizing our impacts while shepherding scarce resources, and using our resources more effectively. They will work smarter “to advance our nation’s interests and values,” “to deliver results for the American people,” and “to use the resources more effectively and to ensure that every dollar with which we are entrusted advances the security, prosperity, and values of the American people.” This option is the equivalent of balancing the national budget and reducing the national debt by eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse. It has the same explanatory value and the same probability of success. And while, at best, it could result in better management, it is not very clearly a path to greater focus.⁷²

As it happens there are ways of working smarter and more efficiently. But they require a different approach in several areas, including procurement and workforce management. They require much greater rigor in each, as well as management tools that even when available are not much used. Perhaps that is what the Obama administration intends. Administrator Shah has inaugurated some elements of that approach through his USAID Forward reforms, some of which are presaged in the QDDR. However, the details are not yet clear and, as noted, they may result in better management, but it is a stretch to say that they will result in greater focus.⁷³

Results

Each of the past several administrations has announced, as if a new discovery, that U.S. assistance abroad should be tied to results rather than, as for its fictional predecessors, inputs and outputs. The Obama administration is no exception. “In the past, we have judged our efforts on inputs rather than outcomes—on dollars spent rather than results delivered.”⁷⁴ And again in a box on foreign-assistance effectiveness principles: “Investing for results. Investments must be focused to achieve measureable results. The United States will promote results-based, focused investments through... focus on outcomes and impact rather than inputs and outputs....”⁷⁵ Finally, to repeat President Obama’s formulation, the United States will “[f]ocus our expertise in a smaller number of sectors, with an emphasis on selectivity and an orientation toward results.”⁷⁶ Managing for results goes back at least to the Clinton administration with Vice President Gore’s “reinventing government”

Measuring for Results”).

72. QDDR, ii, xvi, xix, 7, 207, and 209.

73. USAID, “USAID Announces USAID Forward Agenda,” <http://www.usaid.gov/press/factsheets/2010/fs101118.html>.

74. QDDR, xvi.

75. Ibid., 110.

76. PPD, 5.

and the accompanying Government Performance and Results Act,⁷⁷ which called for goals, impacts, measures, and indicators of progress. That government-wide effort, in which USAID offered itself as a “reinvention laboratory,” put special emphasis on results, as the title of the act says. Even earlier, however, projectized assistance at USAID included project papers and other preliminary documents to discern what sort of impact an assistance project or package would have.

The continuity with past administrations is welcome, but it turns out to be more difficult to achieve measurements of results than expected. Based on private-sector practice mostly in industrialized countries and especially in manufacturing, measuring outputs, impacts, and results are not so easy to quantify in areas like economic policy reform or decentralization. Measuring them in a *meaningful* way is even more important but even harder. Instead, practitioners are driven to things that they can measure, irrespective of how useful or meaningful the measures are, what they actually tell, or how well the goals are really gauged by them. Here surely is a case in which the purposes of Congress and the administration were exactly right—government should be focused on results not dollars spent—but in which their implementation has perverted their intent. In short, the tortured implementation has driven the purposes rather than the other way around. If the implementation of the QDDR can reverse that, it will truly mark a departure from previous administrations, and a welcome one, rather than an unfortunate continuity.

Tied to the emphasis on results is the companion emphasis on accountability, also a theme of several previous administrations. They are tied because the accountability proposed for staff is more than merely following some financial management rules but rather for setting goals and achieving results. “We will empower our people to make decisions and hold them accountable for the results,” notes Secretary Clinton.⁷⁸ It is an ambition and commitment by no means unique to the QDDR or this secretary, appearing consistently, manager to manager, administration to administration, irrespective of party. It is also, unfortunately, an ambition large and noble in promise but almost devoid of meaning in practice. British Petroleum and some of its partners are being held accountable for the April 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. BP itself created an initial spill-response fund of \$20 billion. The president of BP was essentially fired. Perhaps inadequate to the harm, there have been consequences, personal and corporate. In a car accident the driver at fault pays the cost of the damages (if only indirectly through insurance) and may lose the license to drive. Again, the consequences may be inadequate to the harm, but there are some. When contractors put up defective drywall from China, a few at least were required to replace it at their own expense.

There are no such consequences in government. First, there are no real measures by which to hold officers accountable for their judgments, apart, for example, from criminal fraud. Unlike the uniformed military, there are almost never review panels nor therefore are there letters of admonition of the kind recently issued to Col. Harry Tunnell when apparently the men under his command intentionally killed several civilian Afghans and even though he himself was not involved in the murders or even held directly accountable for them.⁷⁹ Nor, on the civilian side, are

77. Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, P.L. 103-62, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/mgmt-gpra/gplaw2m>. See also the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010; P.L. 111-352, <http://www.govexec.com/pdfs/092810rb1.pdf>.

78. QDDR, Introduction.

79. Craig Whitlock, “Probe: No ‘Causal Relation’ between Army Commander, Afghan Killings,” *Washington Post*, April 4, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/army-probe-no-causal-relation-between-commander-afghan-killings/2011/04/04/AFhAPFgC_story.html.

there official military-like letters of reprimand, let alone courts martial, except in truly extreme cases verging on criminal behavior, and almost never do any carry career implications. Nor until one requests senior foreign-service status is there an effective up-or-out system that forces personnel choices. Everyone at USAID, for example, is “extraordinary” and close to 100 percent of its annual performance reviews are there to prove it. Third, most decisions are diffused and hard to identify with or connect to any particular individual. Perhaps most important, officers serve in the same country two to three, sometimes four, years. Then they move on. The consequences of their decisions, even if they could be identified, do not usually vest until well after they have moved to new postings in other countries. Holding people truly accountable would require addressing these issues, and so far there is no serious effort to do so now, any more than when previous secretaries and administrators have made similar promises. Still, it is an exceedingly worthy goal and perhaps Secretary Clinton will ensure that measures are taken to meet it.

National Security

Perhaps the most important continuity with the Bush administration, because of its implications for the ultimate purposes of State and USAID and therefore for the content, structure, and operations of their activities, is their bundling with defense as the three elements of the National Security Strategy of the United States. Arguably diplomacy, and therefore State, has always been at the service of U.S. national interests. Its purpose, arguably, is to represent and defend those interests overseas. How broadly and how narrowly to think about national interests lies also at the heart of the debate between realists and idealists: to what extent are U.S. values and aspirations a part of its national interests for purposes of foreign policy and diplomacy? Broad or narrow, though, diplomacy exists to support those interests. Now, however, the relevant phrase is less “national interests” than “national security,” presumably a narrower concept. The United States has many interests, broad and narrow, but national security has, in the past, been one among many of those interests. If diplomacy now serves national security, it either serves a narrower set of interests or else “national security” has become just another term for “national interests.”

Unlike diplomacy, development has, until September 2001, had a variety of rationales and purposes. Some argued for a narrower definition of development and therefore narrower criteria for decisions about amounts of development assistance, the countries that should receive it, the conditions under which it should be provided, and the expectations for what it should achieve. For example, an entire appropriations account for foreign aid, Economic Support Funds (ESF), has historically been separately appropriated for foreign-policy objectives. It was the ESF account from which large amounts of assistance to the Philippines were provided “in exchange for” (no matter what the fig leaf) access to Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. For decades, ESF provided \$750 million per year for “development aid” to Egypt not because Egypt was a serious “development partner” but because it had withdrawn its army from the Sinai and signed a peace treaty with Israel. Mobutu Sese Seko received many millions of ESF dollars because he aligned Congo with the United States against the Soviet Union. Many more millions of dollars were distributed to others like Mobutu and even more broadly, in effect, to buy votes for the United States at the United Nations. The funds may have been “projectized” for education, health, or economic growth but no one was fooled about the reasons for which they were really provided or what was expected in return.

But not all foreign assistance was ESF and not all was designed with U.S. narrow national

interests in mind. A considerable amount of “development assistance” was appropriated into the appropriately named DA account for more truly development purposes whose contribution to the U.S. national interest was, well, broader: a better world with more prosperous, healthy, educated citizens was “in the U.S. national interest.” That ended, at least as a theoretical matter, with the Bush administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002, which, for the first time, joined defense, diplomacy, and development under the single and common purpose of serving the national security of the United States. What that may have meant, if anything, for Defense and the military services is unclear. They were playing on that field all along. State may have had some relatively minor modifications to make but many of them may have been more semantic than real, whatever the proper meaning of “national security.” But for USAID and the other providers of foreign assistance, the conceptual shift has been—or rather, should have been—much more profound. USAID had not been playing on national security turf. It surely has not seen itself in those terms and many of its most ardent supporters resist doing so even now.

But President Obama has now signed on, very clearly and articulately linking development as part of U.S. national security and even explicitly defense:

- “[D]evelopment is vital to U.S. national security and is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative for the United States.”
- “Development is thus indispensable in the forward defense of America’s interests”
- “The successful pursuit of development is essential to advancing our national security objectives: security, prosperity, respect for universal values, and a just and sustainable international order.”⁸⁰

Now two presidents, Republican and Democrat, have connected national security and development, indeed have put the latter at the service of the former. Two obvious questions: assuming this has meaning beyond a mere slogan, what does, or should, that mean for development? And what does it mean for national security?

For development, it defines its major purposes, its expectations and how it will be measured or judged, as well as the policy frame in which official development assistance will be considered. For those who see development primarily as a humanitarian effort, a responsibility by the wealthier countries to help the poorer ones, this should be ambivalent news. It may mean less pessimism about the use of public funds for, in effect, public charity. It may therefore mean an easier hearing by the public and, as a proxy, on Capitol Hill for development funding. But it also means that decisions about allocations between countries and decisions between programs will presumably be made on the basis of U.S. national interests and, more particularly, on U.S. national security interests. Development decisions will be made on a national-security calculus: Does this program, in this country, advance or at least make a significant contribution to U.S. national security? There are a lot of “good things” to do in the world but they do not necessarily contribute to national security.

Which raises the second question, what does it mean for national security? What does it really mean, other than a slogan, that development contributes to national security? And in what way? National security is the ultimate purpose of government, its *sine qua non*. Unfortunately, because

80. PPD, 1.

for that reason it still commands public support, national security may be misused as the basis for many government programs, not just development and diplomacy. The public associates national security with the military defense of U.S. territorial integrity and core U.S. economic and security interests and perhaps those of its closest allies, for example, those in NATO or Australia, New Zealand, or Japan. No doubt, the attacks in September 2001 have broadened that definition, although Iraq and Afghanistan have taxed that expansion. There is little appetite for another foreign military engagement merely on the grounds that the target country harbors (or is alleged to harbor) terrorists. There are too many potential terrorists, too many weak or harboring countries, too few troops, too many deaths and casualties, and too few national resources. It has become more than a mere jingle that the United States cannot be everyone's policeman.

But when the public discourse on any number of programs resorts to national security for justification, it taxes meaning, credibility, and public support. If not just the army and navy, but also education, obesity, domestic violence, and mass transportation are all matters of national security, how far behind can potholes be? So when President Obama says that development is a matter of national security and then goes on to say that "our investments in development—and the policies we pursue [that] support development—can encourage broad-based economic growth and democratic governance, facilitate the stabilization of countries emerging from crisis or conflict, alleviate poverty, and advance global commitments to the basic welfare and dignity of all humankind,"⁸¹ he promises too much from development and includes too much in national security.

He is not easily saved by the elusive word "can." The clear implication is that development "will" do these things or at the minimum will make a significant contribution to them. And that the contribution serves our national security, not in some vague way that everything is tied to everything else and therefore better playgrounds will also contribute to national security through smarter and happier future citizens. Rather, the force of the Presidential Policy Determination and the following language in the QDDR lie in the allegation that diplomacy and development contribute directly and immediately to the national security, as ordinarily (not expansively) defined: as in "the forward defense." If national security is now to be conflated with "the basic welfare and dignity of all humankind," national security and forward defense will lose their rhetorical, explanatory, and policy value. National security will become another meaningless term.

So especially if national security is to have meaning and if diplomacy and development are two inherent dimensions of national security, they will both need narrower definitions and tighter criteria than they have in the past. The burden for assistance will not only be the already difficult question: Does this program really contribute tangible (and relatively short-term) results for better health, higher rates of growth, or more democracy? And are there quantifiable indicators linking the assistance to the results? Now, in addition: Even if the program could meet those tests, how will it directly advance U.S. national security in country X? How vital is country X to U.S. national security anyway? For those who wanted a harder, tighter, more politically defensible argument for foreign assistance, all this linkage to national security may well be a mixed blessing. And for the others, who see development as a matter of humanitarian response or social justice—for some, now even a "right"—development as an element in national security is a step backward: it links development to diplomacy and, even worse, to defense and the military, and it does so through U.S. national interests rather than the interests of the poor in recipient countries.

81. Ibid., 2.

Conclusion

Just about midway through its tenure, the Obama administration has provided its conception of and plans for diplomacy and development. Notwithstanding the grand language of “sweeping review of diplomacy and development” and the public effort and notice that went into the QDDR, the surprise is the extent of the continuities and the relatively few areas of divergence. This is hardly a new departure. Mostly, it is business as usual. The “sweeping reform agenda” and the transformation of State and USAID are not much in evidence. If hard choices and tradeoffs have been made, it is difficult to see where. A few new presidential initiatives have been proposed, but they are on well-trod territory—food/hunger, health, and climate—and they are additions, not the result of hard choices and tradeoffs. There is language about a “new global architecture” and a greater emphasis on “whole of government” approaches. But these are not really new either. Indeed, at salient points in the QDDR, mention is made, appropriately, of Secretary Rice’s similar attempts. Perhaps the Obama administration will have greater success than she did. Without a much greater role, and probably staff, at the National Security Council, it is hard to see much more effective coordination among existing entities nor is it clear how that would happen, again absent much more attention from the White House itself.

Moreover, the PPD and the QDDR come amid a potentially tectonic shift in political attention: the problem of the deficit and the debt. The shift from Democratic to Republican control of the House adds to that dynamic, but does not really alter it. The growing deficit, the artificially low interest rates, the sluggish economic recovery, the persistently high unemployment, the huge debt, the volatile markets, and the increasingly acrimonious relations on the Hill between the parties and the two chambers would have concentrated the attention of a Democratic as well as a Republican House. The proposed cuts in spending would have been a part of any new budget. Funding for diplomacy and development—foreign aid in the old lingo—would have been cut by Democrats as well as Republicans, although perhaps the cuts would have been smaller and differently allocated. However, the QDDR was released *after* not *before* the 2010 elections. Surely the debate during the campaign and the change in the House must have alerted its drafters that the new initiatives would be “iffy” at best and that older initiatives were also imperiled. But no one wanted to go back to the beginning just when, finally, the QDDR was about to be released. Yet it does lend the document something of an air of disbelief or unreality given the new circumstances. Additional spending proposals may well seem “dead on arrival” in light of the budget cuts already enacted for the remainder of 2011, never mind the cuts proposed by both parties for 2012. This may well be a plan whose time has already passed.

More disappointing, however, is the lost opportunity of the QDDR. “When I was a Senator, I served on the Armed Services Committee, where I watched the Defense Department go through its impressive Quadrennial Defense Review. I saw how the QDR provided a strategic plan for the department. It forced hard decisions about priorities. It was a clear-eyed answer to the question: *How can we do better?*” Perhaps for that reason, “I have made the QDDR one of our highest priorities,” said Secretary Clinton in her introduction,⁸² presumably because it was to have announced the hard choices, the sweeping reform agenda, and the organizational transformations. Yet the QDDR is a much more pedestrian document than Secretary Clinton seems to have hoped for. Much of it is inward- rather than outward-looking. It is too much a management review, not enough a real strategy document. Rigorous management reviews should be welcome, of course,

82. QDDR, Introductory letter from Secretary Clinton.

especially at State and USAID. Nothing at all wrong with that. But not in the guise of a global strategy document “making tradeoffs and hard choices.” The areas for assistance, for example, are the same as those inherited from the Bush administration except that one or two have been added, which is not a hard choice. At the diplomatic level, there are no apparent reductions in embassies or consulates. Reallocations of positions from traditional embassies, for example in Europe, to other regions or to conflict countries were announced but are not discussed in the QDDR. It announces that such choices and changes will be made but provides no criteria for them.

Indeed, the QDDR is not, per se, even a rigorous management exercise. It is too much a general appeal for more resources. But (leaving the U.S. deficit problem aside entirely) why? And how would they be used? Where do the challenges of China get serious attention? Or the frightening spiral in Pakistan with its nuclear weapons and its enmity with India? What about Latin America and the U.S. neighborhood, especially Mexico? The surprising events in the Middle East (the Arab Spring) came after the QDDR, so their exclusion should not be surprising. But the challenges in these other regions are hardly new, nor is the growing influence of the “new emerging market” countries. What are the challenges and priorities for diplomacy? For development? That is what a real strategy should lay out. Indeed that is where it should begin. What are the challenges facing the United States? Which are more and which are less critical? What is the proposed strategy, the proposed plan, for dealing with them? It is only *after* an analysis of the goals and obstacles and a plan for connecting the two is clear and only after priorities have been set that the resources needed to implement such a plan can be reasonably, *strategically* derived and analyzed. Absent that proposed strategic optic, an appeal for more resources is too likely to be greeted as just another in a long line of predictable bureaucratic pleas.

The QDDR surely represents the right impulse: articulate a clear strategy with clear explicit or implicit priorities, then let the tactics and resources follow. The QDR would have been a good model for a strategic plan, as Secretary Clinton said. The QDDR falls short of that goal, dwelling on organization and resources, which should follow not drive policy and strategy. But as a first try, it can provide lessons for a better second attempt. The most important lesson: If you are going to do a strategy, understand what that means, and then do it. Hopefully, next time.



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