Toward a New security Framework: Civil-Military Relations and Interagency Coordination"

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Summary

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said that "we need to strengthen America's nonmilitary instruments of national power… [and] look at the underlying bureaucratic structure of the U.S. national security apparatus." As the foreign policy community broadens its conception of security, the Department of Defense is also called to reexamine and renegotiate its role, structure and strategy in relation to other government agencies and civil institutions. This 3rd forum in a series on Defense, Development, and Diplomacy will explore the best ways to address appeals from various sectors for more interagency coordination and cooperation. To what extent and in what contexts should the military work with civilian organizations and the Department of State to effectively achieve shared objectives?

MODERATOR
Lisa Schirch—Director, 3D Security Initiative
Lisa Schirch is a former Fulbright Fellow in East and West Africa and has worked in over 20 countries with communities and government leaders. She is the director of the 3D Security Initiative, which promotes civil society perspectives on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in U.S. security policymaking. With colleagues in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, Schirch consults with a network of strategic partner organizations involved in peacebuilding activities throughout the United States, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Schirch has written five books and numerous articles on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Her current research interests include civil-military dialogue and the intersection of security and climate change, sustainable development, the media, and conflict prevention. She is a frequent public speaker and has TV and radio experience discussing U.S. foreign policy. She holds a B.A. in International Relations from the University of Waterloo, Canada, and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University.

PANELISTS
Reuben Brigety—Director, Sustainable Security Program, Center for American Progress
Reuben E. Brigety, II is the Director of the Sustainable Security Program at Center for American Progress. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a recipient of the council's prestigious International Affairs Fellowship. He is the author of Ethics, Technology and the American Way of War and a variety of other articles and book chapters. Before entering academia, Brigety was a researcher with the Arms Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW) where he served on research missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also served as HRW's coordinator for crisis management during the Iraq war and as an HRW delegate to the Convention on Conventional Weapons negotiations in Geneva. Brigety is a Distinguished Midshipman Graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and also holds an MA in Philosophy and a Ph.D. in International Relations from Cambridge University.

Barak A. Salmoni—Full Political Scientist, RAND Corporation
Barak Salmoni has been a Full Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation in Washington, DC, since July 2008. He specializes in Middle East intra-state conflict and military education and training for hybrid and complex operations. Before joining the RAND Corporation, Dr. Salmoni was the founder and Deputy Director of the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM). Prior to this, Dr Salmoni was on the faculty of U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, where he taught courses on Islamic history and religion, Middle Eastern history, as well as politics, religion, identity, and civil-military relations. He worked with the Marines in Iraq during June 2004, August 2005, and October 2006; with the U.S. Army Human Terrain System in February 2008; and as a member of MNF-IStrategy, Plans, and Assessments during March-April 2008. Dr. Salmoni has previously taught at Harvard University, where he earned his Ph.D. in Middle Eastern History, as well as Holy Cross College, University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore, and Moravian College.

Lt. Col. Shannon Beebe—Former Senior Africa Analyst, Office of U. S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence
As one of the leading thinkers in the United States on the concept of human security, Lieutenant Colonel Beebe's work explores 21st Century concepts of security in Africa. Lieutenant Colonel Beebe has traveled extensively in Africa conducting research in 12 African countries, listening to how Africans view their security. Of particular note, his research has placed special emphasis on the environment as a key to stability in Africa and has worked with numerous international environmental agencies, NGOs, think-tanks, and academia in an attempt to find synergistic solutions. Lieutenant Colonel Beebe is a frequent guest lecturer on African security both in the United States and abroad. He has been featured in a National Geographic Television special on environment and security in Africa. Lieutenant Colonel Beebe received his Bachelor's of Art in Political Science from the United States Military Academy in West Point, and his MA from the University of North Carolina. He will become the United States Assistant Army Attaché to Angola beginning August 2009.

Transcript

Schirch: Over the last two to three years, there has been a wave of a new paradigm concerning security in the U.S. This is catching on in the United States from ideas expressed abroad, like in Canada. We are beginning to think about engaging the world with development, diplomatic and defense tools (3Ds). How do we get the balance of these different aspects of security policy right? Other terms that relate to this include "interagency coordination" between entities such as USAID, Department of State, and Department of Defense. There is the concept of civil-military relations through the interagency process or through civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Most of the partners that form the partners of this forum are the NGOs that work on peacebuilding on the ground and who think about the structured ways that changes in the security paradigm present challenges and opportunities for us. Challenges include what happens when you have people in military uniform working on conflict prevention in Angola, for example. How do you relate civil society to the military operations in the field? Another challenge is the bureaucratic infrastructure involved in each of the 3Ds. What are the interagency struggles and what is the competition like between them? How do you train and prepare people to work together in a new era of civil-military cooperation?

Brigety: Bureaucratic challenges involved in the 3Ds are important right now. Dealing with the bureaucratic challenges is important even though it might seem arcane and boring. Some might think that we don't need to reform the architecture, but bureaucratic structures matter profoundly. It matters for building a framework for new policy. It is also important to look at the distribution of resources because we need a bureaucratic structure that provides resources to agencies to sustain them. Bureaucratic structures also matter. We have learned at Center for American Progress that having development voices in the appropriate councils of government is vital because development operations are so important to our strategic plans. We looked at this concerning the situation in Afghanistan. The simulation showed that putting development professionals in the room completely changed the conversation about how we can use development tools on the operational level and on the ground in Afghanistan. The only way you can ensure that the views of the development community in the United States are considered at every level of operation is to ensure that you have a bureaucratic structure that protects the development mission wherever we are in the world. We need to get to a point when development agencies and workers can claim the right to sit at the table instead of just asking to be there or being invited to be there. It's a voice we don't want to hear but that we need to hear. We wouldn't have the problems in Iraq that we had right after the initial invasion if we had had development experts at the table making decisions about the aftermath reconstruction phase. We cannot afford that kind of failure of policies again.

One of the things we've talked about at length is thinking about development assistance as two things: Fundamental assistance, who's goal is to improve the standard of living of the people of the focus country, and instrumental assistance, which aims to improve people's lives for strategic reasons. For example, fundamental assistance might be improving education in Trinidad. However, making sure to employ the young, unemployed men in Sadr City is an instrumental assistance because there is a clear strategic end to go along with economic benefits for Iraqis in the latter case. The government of the U.S. has a vital interest in the correct performance of both these types of assistance. We need to protect their funding that is used for projects in the field. Fundamental AND instrumental considerations must be taken into account. We need to ensure that those parts of our government involved in each level of assistance can ask for resources in the same way as others involved in national security have in the past. Center for American Progress thinks that the best way to do this is with a Cabinet-level position for the development community, like they have in the government of Britain. If we have a Cabinet-level agency, then that agency can have a much more aggressive role in fundamental assistance. It could work on protecting vulnerable fundamental assistance and coordination with the

Department of Defense on issues of instrumental assistance. Short of a Cabinet-level agency, there may be a way to protect both missions, but those other ways are sub-optimal.

There are other things to do to strengthen bureaucratic structures: Increase dramatically the number of development professionals in government. This means not just more people, but more appropriate staff at all levels of government. We are improving the number that we have right now, but more needs to be done. Center for American Progress advocates that there be enough development professionals hired so that there can be tactical development advisors–more junior advisors that you can deploy with marine corps battalions, etc. When you have a tactical unit sent out, if we increase the number of development experts in the government, each unit could have on site development expertise they can call on at will to ask questions about the best way to engage development issues in the field. You can do that with deployment of tactical development advisors and by training the military in development strategy too. There is no need for a delineation between conventional operations and non-kinetic tools. There are other points with regard to changing legal restrictions and committee structures in Congress to better orient policy towards 3D solutions to security issues for the United State; but bureaucratic structure matters and the optimal way to take advantage of 3D structures is through bureaucratic reform. In the short term there is a need to increase staff and change resources. We need a national strategy for development similar to the national military strategy used by the Pentagon.

Salmoni: We definitely need to have development education from the tactical to strategic level—at all levels of security. In the Post-Operation Iraqi Freedom role, even since the Berlin Wall came down, there has been a complex and challenging environment shaped by demographic shifts, globalization, technological diffusion, climate change, and a uniquely strong competition for resources. Leaders of the difference agencies in the U.S. should be versatile and agile. They should be endowed with new types of skills, including cultural and linguistic skills, and work effectively with other agencies.

Strategic leaders must have cognitive characteristics to understand infrastructure and pathways to problem solving. They must be able to coordinate themselves with other agencies while having possibly different goals from their partners. Strategic leaders must show a commitment to relationship-building to build confidence. They must be approachable and serve equally as a communicator between agencies and as a mentor. They should have the ability to communicate, write well, and talk well. Leaders should be able to envision an idea, inspire people and implement it. How we gain these skills is important. We need to develop a new education for this by encouraging non-traditional military education to become the norm and encouraging civilian education and fellowships at think tanks and other departments of government among members of the different development, diplomatic and defense communities. There should also be teaching opportunities for the future agency experts to serve as a learning experience to be able to teach people in the future. We need more nuanced perspectives of the other foreign militaries and governments to see how they operate. It is possible that we could adopt parts of other foreign structures to make our system work more efficiently. We need to understand how interagency structures work and to think about them critically before we go in and fight around the world. We need to know the people before we go into war because this establishes relations that could help determine our success overseas. There needs to be "military cross-pollination." Special Forces operatives need to know how large organizations work, not just how to be a part of a small operational team. General Petraeus has to learn from and work with small Special Forces units. Leaders need to also increase the value they place on staff time as opposed to command time.

There are four different paths through which officers as they become generals realize the value of acquiring these skills: (1) all-staff, (2) Lawrence of Arabia's experience, (3) a hybrid career in which a General Forces leader has worked with Special Forces, and (4) an Officer for all seasons, someone who's not involved in combat, artillerymen, but whose background in logistics can help when looking at different problems on the ground, like refugee affairs. There is not enough education in regional studies and there are not enough non-combat specialties out there.

This leaves us with a few questions. Many have had opportunities to expand their education beyond merely military education serendipitously, but how do we institutionalize these opportunities? We need to create opportunity spaces, and institutionalize these opportunities.

Lt. Col. Beebe: We can only achieve things for which we have words. The strategic/security narrative we have today fails in taking on the challenges of the security environment we have in reality today. Security is not the same as defense. Security is not kinetics-based, state-focused, defense. This is the central issue that we are facing in the 21st century. It is

about conditions that create creeping vulnerability. We often don't see our vulnerabilities as threats in time. When was the last time that a mosquito or someone who lives on less than one dollar a day a threat to the United States? Not until now, but this is a challenge we will face in the future. These threats are not going to be overcome with multi-trillion dollar, military-industrial complexes, with expensive weapons. The efforts to combat them are not going to be done by Department of Defense alone. Is it possibly the case that we are creating more terrorists than we can possibly kill by allowing these creeping vulnerabilities to continue to grow until they are a kinetic threat? Right now we do not have the context to bring communities of interest together. We have to have a language between NGOs and the military where they can talk to each other and understand each other.

What is lacking in Africa? There are deficiencies in the health sector, poverty, personal security, political security. The top four challenges according to Africans in Africa for security are security sector reform (including reform of the military, police, and the judiciary), the environment, poverty, and health crises. We don't have a tank or a plane that will counter these problems. These things are so important that we need to look at how we can create a dialogue where we can work together with the development agencies and the military. Water is one of the most critical issues of the 20th century. Everyone is doing something about it but we are not working together on it. This is not Department of Defense trying to invade humanitarian space; this also should not be a scenario in which Department of Defense pushes a plough at the point of a spear. We need to work together. It's better to be the world's policeman than to be the world's fireman— putting out all the fires we created. Things are not the same today. Challenges will not come from leaders but from sub-state actors. The world has systemically changed politically to a multi-polar world with more instability than there was during the Cold War, and it has changed economically in ways that we can't understand yet. Global inequality has increased while technologically we have come together. Globalization has un-tethered our global security system. We need to ask the first-order question we aren't asking: what is security for the 21st century?

Q&A

Question: How do you see the NGO community working with the Department of Defense as we head forward?

Beebe: Until the narrative is there that there is an understanding that no one is stepping on each other's toes, but that we are both working together to prevent war, it will be difficult. We need to reach out to entities like AFRICOM and work on small ways to combat these barriers to communication and these conflicts that need to be prevented, managed or resolved. We may even want to speak with Greenpeace. There are mutual interests between people's missions in each of the 3Ds. This isn't about kinetics. There are times when the military should play a supportive role, but we should also be supporting ongoing work of NGOs.

Question: With all these talks about bureaucratic changes, training requirements, and who should handle these situations, there need to be approaches towards what is happening in unstable areas right now where we haven't gotten to the strategic area yet. What do you do, who does it, for what purposes at specific times?

Brigety: There should be very different strategies for each situation—Georgia and Madagascar are in no way the same conflict. There is a need to sort out different levels of causation in each conflict and THEN deploy different instruments. If we don't answer the strategic problem, we don't have a guide on how to implement interagency coordination. There are processes that need to be developed, but it's easier than the much harder problem of convincing the American public that there are multiple aspects of needs for our security and that they and their representatives in Congress need to support this change in how we operate on security issues. Then we will have emboldened development agencies working with the military. That's a harder problem for a variety of reasons. We have a political culture that supports outrageous investments in military, but cries about any money going into civilian investments into security. This is a historical debate of a conflict between the global way of battling the USSR and including non-state actors, in the 60s-70s won out. Less attention was paid to regional dynamics. The challenge is that you want to have a global strategy, but a global strategy that is driven by a ground theory and recognizes the need for having leaders who are particularly regionally attuned while exposing them to the more global strategy requirements. We need local nuance to our global strategies.

Question: What kind of reception are these ideas getting in this administration, especially from Secretary Clinton? Where is the administrator for USAID?

Brigety: The President has said that one of his most important foreign policy priorities is success in Afghanistan, and in order to achieve that he's going to put Pakistan and Afghanistan together as one conflict to work on, increase aid to Afghanistan, and dispatch hundreds more civilian experts to Afghanistan. It is an open question whether we can achieve

that with current military-civilian structures. What could happen in a year from now after the money is spent and things not as good as we want them to be in Afghanistan is that Congress might ask themselves, what are we not doing better? Civilian structures will need to be improved and now there is more pressure on changing them.

Question: An historical example of development, diplomacy, and defense working together successfully?

Brigety/Salmoni: The best example is the Philippines. There is cooperation between government and US military there. They had a plan for counterinsurgency, an ambassador who was willing to get involved in the process, and a robust administrator of security projects. The trick is that we cannot just beat heads in. We need to attack the root problems within the population, education system, health care system, and economic system. We may not be presented with a compliant host government, or a level of Congressional support for the development portion of the program. If this is the case, there is a risk that we won't have the civilian leadership on the ground that we need, nor a military commander who really understands the non-kinetic pieces of the conflict. These are what can derail 3D efforts. Yemen is ripe for this approach, but has not been successful. In Yemen, there are 4Ds at work: defense cooperation, democratization, development, and diplomatic engagement with the regime. It has not been a success. Why not? It has not been a success because we have not pursued each of the Ds with equal vigor. It is a Yemeni regime which used USAID, diplomacy, and defense more for domestic security and repression. Yemen took advantage of the fact that the United States values the Global War on Terror more than democracy and development. This is an environment where the government is filled with bad guys. The neo-patrimonial nature of the regime in Yemen means that there is a lack of political control in the country, lack of continuity. It is in a geo-strategic place. It has big neighbors. We cannot go forward because we haven't changed how we do things. For example, with the Global War on Terror: take out the "Terror" and put in "Communism" and we see that we don't have the language to continue to replicate successes. Our security strategy is like having an American baseball umpire in a cricket match.

Question: Can you have legitimate coordination when there remains a massive imbalance of resources?

Salmoni: Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are criticized in Afghanistan because they are seen as undermining Afghan government efforts and appear to be a symbol of US occupation. We need to empower the Afghan government to meet the needs of its people. Why put so much energy into this coordination when there may be a better model without using the military, which can undermine the goals of the operation? The appropriate relationships and narratives are there between the PRTs and the civilian operations in Afghanistan. The problem is that doctrine lags far behind. What is even more disturbing is that cultures lag far behind doctrinal change. The organizational cultures lag farther behind doctrine. The most negative implications are in structures and bureaucratic relationships, not money. But we want to prevent situations like that in Afghanistan, so we shouldn't use it as an example because it's a post-conflict situation. The military needs to make itself obsolete in places like Georgia.

Question: Do we actually know what "development" is?

Brigety/Beebe: Of course we are working in our self-interest. Of course nothing is always altruism. Development is complicated, it takes a long time. But we have learned things in the last 40 years. We have learned what doesn't work and we have learned what does work. This doesn't mean you can apply a one-size-fits-all development program everywhere, but we do know what has worked will for us in the past. People want a reliable partner with a sustainable mechanism through which they can help. We need to think about development in terms of sustained engagement with these countries. We need sustainable security architecture.